

**THE ATTITUDES OF MANAGERS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE GRINDROD GROUP**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

**I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.**



## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the effective and efficient implementation of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) within a specific group of companies. A central argument underlying the study is that the attitudes of managers and students who participate in these programmes play a critical role in the successful implementation of such programmes. The specific objective of the study is to identify those factors that influence managers' and students' attitudes towards ABET within the Grindrod Group.

A literature review traces the origin of ABET and its historical development within other countries as well as in the South African context. The role of ABET within the context of Human Resources Development is identified and explored. The research entails a case study of the implementation of ABET within the Grindrod Group of Companies. Quantative as well as qualitative information regarding managers' and students' attitudes were obtained. The attitudes of both the managers and students at Grindrod's were identified by using structured questionnaires during 1998-1999. The questionnaire included closed as well as open questions. In-depth interviews were also conducted with a selected group of managers and students. The aim of the interviews was to facilitate a deeper understanding of managers' and students' attitude towards ABET and the variables that might influence these attitudes. In the case of students interviews were conducted with those who had dropped out of ABET programmes.

While the attitude of both managers and students could be described as positive, the study suggests that the following variables can be seen to influence managers' attitudes towards ABET: seniority of managers, their political orientation, their educational qualifications and the number of years that ABET has been in operation in a specific company. As far as students are concerned, the following variables seem to play a role: the length of their employment, their occupational status, the level of the ABET module that they participate in as well as their formal educational level.

The problem that was most commonly cited by managers was that the ABET programme resulted in operational disruptions because the programme was run in working hours. The most regularly identified benefits included improved communication between managers and employees, improved motivation of employees and identification of development potential of employees. The vast majority of all the employees that partook in ABET stated that they believed that they had benefited from the programme. The most commonly cited benefits included being able to write, speak, read and understand English.

While the study focuses on a specific group of companies within a specific industrial sector and does not allow generalisations to be made, it nevertheless attempts to lay a foundation for further research to be undertaken regarding the implementation of these programmes in different sectors of the economy.



## OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel na die effektiewe en doeltreffende implementering van programme vir die Basiese Onderrig en Opleiding vir Volwassenes (ABET – Adult Basic Education and Training) binne 'n spesifieke groep van maatskappye. 'n Belangrike uitgangspunt van die studie is dat die houdings van bestuurders en studente wat aan hierdie programme deelneem 'n kritiese rol speel in die suksesvolle implementering al dan nie van sodanige programme. Die studie poog om enkele faktore wat moontlik verband hou met bestuurders en studente se houdings teenoor programme binne die Grindrod Groep te identifiseer.

'n Literatuurstudie is gedoen van die oorsprong en historiese ontwikkeling van ABET wêreldwyd sowel as in Suid-Afrika. Die rol van ABET binne die konteks van Menslike Hulpbronontwikkeling is ook geïdentifiseer en ondersoek. Die navorsing behels 'n gevallestudie van die implementering van ABET binne die Grindrod Groep van Maatskappye. Kwantitatiewe sowel as kwalitatiewe inligting betreffende bestuurders en studente se houdings is bekom. Die bestuurders en studente by Grindrod se onderskeie maatskappye se houding teenoor ABET is vasgestel d.m.v. gestruktureerde vraelyste gedurende 1998-1999. Die vraelyste het beide geslote en 'oop' vrae ingesluit. Benewens die aanwending van vraelyste, is daar ook in-diepte onderhoude met 'n geselekteerde groep bestuurders en studente gevoer. Die doel van die onderhoude was om 'n beter begrip te ontwikkel betreffende bestuurders en studente se houding teenoor ABET en die faktore wat hul houding beïnvloed. In die geval van studente is onderhoude gevoer met diegene wat nie die program suksesvol voltooi het nie.

Terwyl die houding van bestuurders en studente in die algemeen as positief beskryf kan word, suggereer die ondersoek dat die volgende faktore bestuur se houding teenoor ABET beïnvloed, naamlik, die senioriteit van bestuurders, hul politieke oriëntasie, hul opvoedkundige kwalifikasies en die aantal jare wat programme in die betrokke onderneming geïmplementeer is. In die geval van studente blyk die volgende faktore 'n rol te speel: aantal jare wat studente in diens van die onderneming is, hul posisie binne die onderneming, die vlak van die module wat deur die studente gevolg word asook die vlak van skoolonderrig wat hulle ontvang het.

Die mees algemene probleem wat bestuurders identifiseer is dat ABET programme operasionele onderbrekings veroorsaak omdat die program tydens werksure geïmplementeer word. Voordele wat met die program geassosieer word behels verbetering van kommunikasie

tussen bestuurders en werknemers, verhoogde motivering van werknemers en die identifisering van die ontwikkelingspotensiaal van werknemers. Die oorgrote meerderheid van die studente wat deelgeneem het in die ABET program was van mening dat die program vir hulle van nut was. Die belangrikste voordeel wat deur die studente geïdentifiseer is, is dat dit hulle in staat gestel het om Engels te skryf, praat, lees en verstaan.

Terwyl die ondersoek fokus op 'n bepaalde groep maatskappye binne 'n bepaalde nywerheidssektor en dus nie veralgemenings toelaat nie, poog dit om 'n grondslag te lê vir verdere navorsing oor die implementering van sodanige programme in verskillende sektore van die ekonomie.



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## INTRODUCTION

Adult education is a global phenomenon that has become particularly prevalent since the 1980s. South Africa is, however, faced with a unique challenge in Adult Education. South Africa is a Third World country, saddled with inequalities in adult education levels as a result of apartheid policies. This has resulted in a situation where a high proportion of the South African population are functionally illiterate (with reading levels of below Standard 7 or, what is now referred to as, Grade 9). Recent statistics indicate that 30 per cent of the South African labour force has no formal education and between five and seven million South Africans between the ages of 15 and 65 years are illiterate (*The Cape Times*, 12 Jan. 1998). According to Dehghanpisheh (*The Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998) 15 million South Africans are estimated to be functionally illiterate. This unacceptably high rate of illiteracy has resulted in a great need for adult education and training programmes. It is in light of this that I decided to embark on a study of Adult Education and Training (ABET). The study is a case study of ABET within the Grindrod group of companies, where I was employed and an active participant in the administration of the ABET programme.

On the basis of my involvement in the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme, I became increasingly aware that the success or failure of a programme is largely determined by the attitude of the managers who have subordinates participating in ABET, and the students themselves. Based on the hypothesis that attitude (of managers and students) is central to the success or failure of an ABET programme, I started my research on what the attitudes of these managers and students in Grindrod were towards ABET.

In order to gauge the attitudes of the managers towards ABET, I designed a structured questionnaire. One of the items included in the questionnaire consisted of 20 different statements about ABET to which the managers were asked to respond. They were given a choice of 5 responses to each statement, namely: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Each of these responses was represented by a score, and the Lickert scale technique was used to rate the attitudes of the managers on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 representing the most negative attitude towards ABET and 100 the most positive attitude.

The interview also was designed to obtain information as to the characteristics of each manager, for example, the manager's age, education level, length of service, political orientation etc. The reason for obtaining data on the management characteristics was to



determine whether these characteristics had an influence on the attitude of the managers towards ABET. My belief is that if we can identify characteristics of managers that may or may not influence their attitudes towards ABET, we are better able to identify managers that are more or less likely to support an ABET programme and, in some instances, we may even be able to positively influence the attitude of managers towards ABET.

Questionnaires were also administered to the students that were partaking in ABET in the various divisions of the Grindrod group of companies. The purpose of these questionnaires was to measure the attitudes of the students towards ABET, and to consider which characteristics of the student may or may not have an influence on his or her attitude towards ABET. Once again the aim of obtaining this information was to determine which employees in the company are more or less likely to support an ABET programme and how we may be able to positively influence the attitudes of students.

In order to contextualise the study of ABET within the Grindrod Group, ABET will be considered within the context of the international community and, more specifically, within the context of South Africa. The first chapter will, therefore, explore adult education within third world countries. The focus will then shift to South Africa to look specifically at the effects of the apartheid system on education. In the latter part of this chapter we will also consider the history and development of ABET in South Africa as well as recent trends in ABET. We will, however, start by taking a brief look at the global phenomenon that gave rise to Adult Education.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTEXTUALISING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Dekker and Lemmer (1994:295) suggest that the global growth of adult education can be attributed to many situational factors such as changing demographic factors that have resulted in the global population becoming older. As a result, there simply are more adults that need education. Technology advancements require a change in the face of the work place and have thereby put more pressure on the worker in society to keep up with new knowledge. The ever-increasing number of women entering the work force has also contributed to a greater need for adult education.

#### 1.1 Schooling in Third World countries

It is essential that we examine schooling in Third World countries, as the level of adult education in these countries is directly related to the level of schooling that these adults received in their formative years. If the schooling system in Third World countries had no flaws and all children had access to good basic education, there would be no need for Adult Basic Training today. This is not to suggest that there would be no need to train adults. All age groups within any society will need training if they are to keep abreast with technological changes. However, there would not be a need for *basic* training in fields such as reading and writing and numeracy skills.

Gould (1993:31) points out that education has been enormously variable in space and time. In Western Europe and North America a level of almost universal admittance for at least primary school level had been achieved only by the 1920s. At about the same time, however, levels of admittance in Third World countries were low. Gould suggests that the main period of third world enrolment expansion has occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly in the three decades after the Second World War. It was in this period that major political changes took place in many third world countries. With the achievement of independence followed by a period of unprecedented global prosperity, an increasing volume of national and international resources were channelled into education by national and international agencies. Despite these expansions, Third World countries generally still are far



behind developed countries in the quality and quantity of education provided for their populations.

Gould (1993:72) cites various reasons for the lower levels of school attendance in Third World countries. He argues that, where education is universal and compulsory, there will be no social or geographic variations in enrolment rates of children at the appropriate level. These will be close to 100 per cent. However, in most parts of the Third World, education is not compulsory and even where it is compulsory in theory, it is seldom compulsory in practice.

There may also be cultural as well as economic reasons for resistance to modern schooling in Third World countries. Parents may be unwilling to expose their children to new value systems that are taught at schools. In poor societies where children from early years make a significant contribution to the household and family economy, the opportunity cost of sending a child to school may be too high. Wedepol (1984:1), for example, points out that the correlation between poverty and illiteracy is sufficiently high to assume considerable significance. Inequalities in enrolments are therefore the norm at all levels throughout the Third World (Gould, 1993:72).

Social inequalities also play a major role in the low level of school enrolment in Third World countries. The rich tend to receive much more education than the poor and this difference is increasingly marked, with the poor having very restricted access to higher education. Gould also refers to the work of Foster (1977) who pointed out that many studies in all parts of the Third World have catalogued how and why social inequalities in enrolment originate, and, even more important in the long term, how and why they have persisted in the face of considerable expansion and considerable efforts to narrow the social and economic gap. He also refers to the work of Lewin and Xu (1989) who argue that: "Even in previously socialist societies, such as China, where the school system has an overtly social engineering function to contribute to the wider policies of society to narrow and eventually eliminate social class differentials, success has been limited."

Geographic patterns of enrolment are also cited by Gould (1993:74) as being likely to reflect geographical patterns of power and wealth and to be consistent with long established spatial patterns in any country. Research conducted by Falola (1989) and Okafor (1989) suggests that in Nigeria there have been major differences in provision of education between the Northern and Southern parts of the country since the early colonial period. Higher enrolment rates tend to be found in richer regions, particularly in the administrative region containing the capital city.



Enrolment rates tend to be lowest in poorest regions furthest from the political and economic core of the country.

Based on the brief summaries of case studies mentioned in this chapter it is clear that the need for Adult Basic Education and Training in Third World countries may be attributed to the poor schooling that many, if not most, of the adults in these countries received in their formative years. Reasons for poor schooling have been shown to be a combination of socio-economic, cultural, political, and geographic factors.

## **1.2 Schooling in South Africa - The Apartheid era**

The preceding section addressed factors that negatively impact on the quality and availability of schooling in Third World Countries. We will now focus our attention on schooling in South Africa and explore how the previous Nationalist Government Legislation negatively impacted on the schooling of most South African adults, particularly that of blacks.

In the twentieth century, the education system assumed economic importance as it prepared young Africans for low wage labour and protected the privileged white minority from competition. From the 1950s to the mid-1990s, no other social institution reflected the government's racial philosophy of apartheid more clearly than the education system. Since the school were required to teach and practice apartheid, they were especially vulnerable to the weaknesses of the system (<http://www.tcnj.edu/>..)

"Today South Africa belongs to us once more," exulted Malan in his victory speech in May 1948. This victory ushered in intensification and codification of a segregationist system and racism was articulated as a national philosophy. A torrent of new legislation poured forth from the Parliament in Cape Town. In the words of W.A. de Klerk (1976:241) "Never in history have so few legislated so problematically, thoroughly and religiously in such a short time for so many." The laws set specific limits to racial contact in almost every aspect of life - in housing, education, employment, entertainment, sport, public amenities, and personal relations. The new laws also excluded blacks from the established universities and even tried to exclude them from white church services. The Population Registration Act, which required every citizen to be registered according to his/her race group, was also passed. Mixed marriages were prohibited and sexual relations between consenting adults of different skin colour were declared a criminal offence.



The climax of the Apartheid era came with the rise to power of Hendrick Frensch Verwoerd in September 1958. Verwoerd formed a close relationship with the ministry's secretary, Werner Eiselen. The latter was the son of a German missionary who had been a student at Stellenbosch University. Eiselen was an Anthropologist who believed in the need to protect black tribal culture from the deleterious effects of "westernisation." According to Eiselen the aim of government policy should be to prevent blacks from becoming part of the general South African environment and to "encourage them to form an existence of their own." He believed that the black intelligentsia should realize that their first duty is not to become black Europeans but to raise their people to a higher Bantu culture (Sparks, 1997:183-192).

Next, and most important as far as the topic of this thesis is concerned, came the drive to bring black education in line with the new policy and get it out of the hands of the missionaries that were producing the despised and dangerous "Black Englishmen." Eiselen headed a special Native Education Commission that recommended that all black education be brought under the control of the then Department of Native Affairs. The result was that the government would take over all the mission schools as well as the University of Fort Hare. The latter was founded by Scottish missionaries in 1916 and was the first university for blacks in Africa. The Extension of University Education Act also prohibited blacks from attending the major English universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town, and Natal (Sparks, 1997).

The new Bantu Education Act was based on the principles of separate and "different". Verwoerd explained it in Parliament during the debate on the new Bill: Education for blacks should not clash with government policy and should not create unrealistic expectations on the part of the Native himself. Then he went on:

Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to Natives. They cannot improve if the result of Native education is the creation of a frustrated people who, as a result of the education they receive, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately, when it creates people trained for professions that are not open to them, when there are a people who have received a form of cultural training which strengthens their desire for the white collar occupations to such an extent that there are more such people than openings available (cited in Sparks, 1997:196).



Blacks inevitably saw this as education for inferiority, and their view was substantiated by the disparity in state expenditure on schooling for different races. In 1953, the year that the Bantu Education Act was passed, the government spent R180 on each white child in school compared to the R25 allocation to a black child. Many of the best black teachers decided to quit rather than participate in an education system designed, as they saw it, to condition young members of their race for an inferior station in life. This contributed still further to the decline of black education (Sparks, 1997:183-196).

The result of this deliberate attempt by the Nationalist government to provide inferior education to people of colour, particularly blacks, can be seen in the disparities in per capita expenditure on school pupils by race, and by looking at pupil-classroom ratios. According to Verma (1993:32) by 1970 the government allocated only R25 to black scholars per annum as opposed to R461 spent on white scholars, R94 on coloureds and R124 on Indians per annum. By 1990, the government was spending R930 per annum on black scholars as opposed to R3 739 on white scholars, R1983 on coloureds and R2659 on Indians per annum.

It is estimated that in primary schools in 1990, the pupil-classroom ratios for blacks was 51:1 as opposed to 24:1 for whites, 26:1 for Coloureds and 29:1 for Indians. In secondary schools, statistics for the same year show blacks at 41:1 as opposed to whites 19:1, Coloureds at 23:1 and Indians at 27:1 (Verma, 1993).

According to Wilmot (1984:3) the distribution of education credentials in South Africa was also racially biased. He cites the then Current Population Survey (CPS, 1984) which shows that 36,11 per cent of the black population have less than 3 years formal education, 32,34 per cent have between 4 and 7 years, 27,07 per cent have between 8 and 11 years and only 4,47 per cent have 12 years or more. Project Literacy suggest that as many as 40 per cent of adult South Africans are functionally illiterate (*Business Day*, 8 Sept. 1998).<sup>1</sup> The latest census figures, released in October 1998, reveal that over 24 per cent of blacks have received no education, compared with 10 per cent of coloureds, 7 per cent of Indians and 1 per cent of whites. A total of about 3 per cent of blacks have received tertiary education compared to 4,3 per cent of coloureds, 10 per cent of Indians and 24 per cent of whites (<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/news/98Oct2/21>).



On the basis of these statistics it is clear that the residuals of apartheid have contributed to a poorly educated South African adult population, particularly as far as blacks are concerned. This explains some of the present need for Adult Education in South Africa. I am not suggesting that the Apartheid Policy towards the education of blacks was the only factor that contributed to poor schooling in South Africa. The fact that schooling was not compulsory for blacks, as well as economic circumstances, such as the lower socio-economic positions of blacks vis-à-vis whites, and the fact that the subsistence economy of many blacks made it impossible for many children to leave the land and go to school have all contributed to the poor schooling in South Africa. However, it could be argued that these factors are also consequences of the Apartheid Policy.

Without possessing the necessary education and skills provided by adequate schooling, companies are not able to employ these - mostly black -adults beyond low-level occupations within their respective organisational hierarchies. This means that the human resource development potential of many employees within South African companies is severely limited. The only way for South African industries to overcome this problem of inadequate schooling is to invest in training programmes that are designed to provide the necessary education that these adults have been deprived of during their formative years. The following section examines the central theme of this study, that is, adult education and training programmes in South African industries.

### **1.3 The history of ABET in South African industry**

According to Cresswell (1998:19) the first literacy training programmes in South Africa were closely linked to religion. Christian missionaries set up mission stations in fairly remote areas during the last century to convert people to the Christian faith. To make converts with any long-lasting success it was important that the new converts were able to read The Bible. It was hence largely the search "... for souls and not the need to empower that sowed the seeds for ... literacy education structures of today". According to Steve de Gruchy, director of the Kuruman Mofatt Mission Trust based in the Kalahari, the mission set up by Robert Mofatt of the London Missionary Society in 1820 is recognised as the oldest education facility and literacy centre north of the Orange River (cited by Cresswell in *The Star*, 17 Feb. 1998).

According to Wolpe (1994:8) the provision of adult education in South Africa has a mixed history. A Worker's Education Association was in existence in the earlier part of the 20th century, and a range of organisations such as the National Council of Women, Rotarians,



Church organisations, and Trade Unions also provided forms of adult education for the white population. In 1968, adult education became the responsibility of the Department of Cultural Affairs, and in 1969, The National Culture Promotion Act (No. 27 of 1969) came into operation. The main purpose of this Act was:

... to provide for the preservation, development, fostering and extension of the culture of the white population of the Republic by planning, organisation, co-ordination and provision of facilities for the utilisation of leisure, and informal out-of-school education (Behr and Macmillan, 1971, cited in Wolpe, 1994:8).

This then set in motion affirmative action in adult education policy directed towards the white population, and in particular the Afrikaans-speaking population. The emphasis of this policy was on "high culture". Blacks were virtually excluded from this policy and only limited resources were made available to them. Smith (*The Mail & Guardian*, 27 Aug. 1998) describes this period, when ABET started around 60 years ago, as a form of racist and inadequate night schools run by the department of education and training.

Despite the apartheid policies of the Nationalist government, both internal and international pressure eventually forced the State to begin to address the anomalies of the education system and the problems of meeting the demand by industry and commerce for an educated and skilled work force. The State recognised the importance of Non Formal Education (NFE) as a means of tackling the consequences of its own shortsighted policies. A Government report in 1981 on the Provision of Education in the RSA, known as the De Lange Report, did not recognize institutionalised racism as the main cause of the majority of the population being denied education. It did, however, propose a compensatory non-formal form of Adult Education and training at low cost, which could begin to address these deficits. Such a system would be cheaper than the formal education system and could be effected by private enterprise.

The State transferred the responsibility of non-formal education to private enterprise. The latter responded with some sectors introducing a number of training schemes, most of which are concerned with literacy, either of a general nature or directed towards the needs of the enterprise in the work place. Recent "spin-offs" of this transfer of responsibility to the private sector can be seen at Iscor, which is an example of a company that has introduced these training schemes. In 1996, at least 800 employees were enrolled in their Adult Basic Education Training programme, and over a thousand people had been trained in numerous job skills, namely:



upholstery, sewing, cooking, baking, carpentry, welding, brick-laying and plumbing (*Sowetan*, 12 Sept. 1996).

Meanwhile the State has provided some form of adult education through its own agencies, such as the prison system and the army. In August of 1998, for example, thirty-nine prisoners from the Leeuwkop Prison in Sandton received certificates after qualifying as Adult Basic Education and Training practitioners. These practitioners can now teach fellow inmates while serving their term (*Sowetan*, 21 Aug. 1998).

Adult educationalists continued to provide some form of non-formal education, which was directed to the largely dispossessed, disenfranchised, uneducated population, often living under appalling social conditions. The rapid proliferation of community organisations in the 1970s and 1980s has been attributed to social upheaval and political struggle (Walters, 1989). Wolpe (1994) suggests that the role of community organisations is very important in countries where there are no (or limited) social security provisions and restricted educational facilities. And this is the case in South Africa, where community organisations have played a meaningful part, especially in the struggle against apartheid and its oppressive education policies.

Much of the work of these community organisations was carried out under threat of state repressive measures. These repressive measures made it extremely difficult for these organisations to exercise their education programmes from within the community. The difficulties under which people in this sector worked, particularly at the height of repression during the 1980s, are referred to by Kell and Patel (cited in Wolpe, 1994:9).

... the State has embarked on massively infiltrating the democratic movement, and setting up right-wing organisations in an attempt to counter the influence of the MDM (Mass Democratic Movement), as well as setting up surrogate forces, vigilante groups and special constables. The restrictions on organisations and the detention or elimination of leadership has meant that national structures of democratic organisations have largely been broken, and in many cases, even regional structures have found it difficult to continue operating ... Despite all this, organisations in many sectors have managed to continue operating and have consolidated and strengthened their work .

During the 1980s, the political climate in South Africa began to change due to the breakdown of control by the State and the deteriorating economic conditions. In 1989, a conference,



entitled "Facing the Challenges of the 1990s", was hosted by the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) and the Centre for Development Studies, with 250 representatives from 90 organisations in the Western Cape. According to Wolpe, this was one of the first public gatherings of people involved in community organisations in which issues relating to the "transfer of political power" were addressed (Wolpe, 1994:8-10).

Although not much research has been conducted on the progress of Adult Basic Education and Training initiatives in South African Industries, it is safe to say that ABET has been implemented in all of the industrial sectors comprising our economy. The latest statistics for the Maritime Industry, for example, indicate that since 1996, the Maritime Industries Training Board (MITB) has subsidized the studies of some 1 556 ABET students at a cost of R3.5 million, with a further R1.8 million budgeted for 1999 (*Maritime Industry Training Board NEWSLINE*, May 1999). Operating in the Chemicals Oils and Plastics Sector, SASOL had already invested in ABET by the mid-nineties and, in 1996, 395 SASOL mining employees attended full-time literacy classes. This brings the total of SASOL Mining beneficiaries to more than 2 200 by the end of 1996 (<http://www.sasol/>). Another corporate giant that has invested in ABET is ESKOM, which claimed to have had sent 11 000 employees through literacy and numeracy training by the end of 1996 (<http://duvi.eskom.co.za/>).

Bethlehem (1997) suggests that industry plays a significant role in addressing illiteracy among its constituencies. Almost half of all adult education takes place at the initiative of business and the industrial sector. It is the one area where both management and unions have worked together successfully for the benefit of all - the company, the union and the individual employee. ABET is, therefore, active in various manufacturing, mining, fishing, transport and shipping industries.

There are numerous factors in the South African socio-political environment that place tremendous pressure on South African companies to invest in Adult Basic Education and Training. On the one hand, companies are faced with the SA Government's plan to establish a National Training Board. The purpose of this National Training Board will be to co-ordinate all learners from all learning and training institutions and to impose a levy on all industries so as to create a central fund for adult education and training (*The Daily News*, 27 March 1998). In the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), all learning is organised into twelve fields. These, in turn, are organised into a number of sub-fields. SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority) has established twelve National Standards Bodies (NSBs), one for each organised



field. These NSBs recommend standards and qualifications for registration with the NQF and the SAQA (<http://www.saqa.org.za>). More detail on the NQF and SAQA will follow later in Chapter 2.

Exactly how the government will go about enforcing this levy on companies is still being debated. Indications are that companies will be charged around 1,5per cent of their gross salary costs. Many of the existing Industry Training Boards, such as the Maritime Industries Training Board (MITB) and the Metal Industries Training Board (MEITB,) have already started to levy companies that fall within their respective industries so as to develop industry-specific training funds. The means of levying these companies and the extent of these levies will probably vary from industry to industry. Unions are also pushing for companies to pay levies to Training Boards.

Whatever the final outcome of the government's proposals, the proposals of the various industry training boards, and union pressures may be, South African companies are being forced into taking responsibility for the training of employees. In addition to government and union pressure on South African companies, there is also an increasing realisation on the part of companies themselves for the need to train and develop skilled staff, if they are to survive in the international market.

Having now considered the history and development of ABET in South Africa and its implementation in industry, the next section examines recent trends and developments in the new South Africa.

#### **1.4 Recent developments in ABET and problem areas.**

Kumi Naidoo notes that there was huge optimism on the part of relevant stakeholders regarding the eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of adult learning in South Africa before, and shortly after, the first democratic elections in 1994 (*Sunday Independent*, 28 June 1998). A persuasive argument made by the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC) was that, of all the gross violations of human rights by the apartheid regime, nothing was more devastating and cynical than the conscious programme to stifle the development of human resources. Naidoo points to the arguments of trade union leaders and various business spokesmen that unless a substantial investment was made in Adult Basic Education and Training, the competitiveness of South Africa would never be realised.



This acknowledgment made some significant strides to put policy frameworks in place and several donors expressed an investment interest. According to Console Tleane, the dawn of the new political dispensation in 1994 saw Adult Basic Education and Training being formalized under the Ministry of Education (*Sowetan*, 10 Sept. 1998). Dehghanpisheh supports Tleane by stating that ABET has existed in various forms in South Africa for decades. However, ABET has only become more formalized since a national government department was established in 1996, with a broader base of health, finance and electoral education issues with basic numeracy and literacy skills (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998). Dehghanpisheh refers to Andrew Miller, Director of Project Literacy, who states: "In the past ABET was somewhat nebulous and do-goody ... but people can now get publicly accredited certificates, which can help in finding jobs" (1998:4).

A further positive development for ABET occurred in 1996 when ABET was named as one of the top ten priorities for the Reconstruction and Development Programme (even though it was the only project that was not directly allocated funds). A final development that Dehghanpisheh points to is the acknowledgment by Joe Samuels, the chairman of the Adult Educators and Trainers Association of South Africa (AETASA), that "the government has achieved quite a lot at policy level" (1998:4). Naidu refers to another recent development in the then Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu's statement that he would start channelling his energies into devising a plan to promote and encourage learning among adults (*The New Nation*, 25 April 1999). Bengu and the National Department of Education stressed their commitment to promoting adult education, backed by a R1,3 million allocation of funding from the Department. AETASA (Adult Education and Trainers Association of South Africa) has also acknowledged that a great deal of work has been done by government, funders, business and civil society to improve conditions for ABET practitioners (Nong, 1998). Recent developments also include the policy and multi-year implementation plan on ABET, the Green Paper and Bill on further education and training, as well as the development of standards for ABET facilitators.

From the above, it is clear that ABET has undergone major changes and is enjoying a lot more attention from government and private enterprise since political democratisation in 1994. Despite these positive developments, however, ABET has also experienced various set backs and still faces numerous problems. At a briefing on ABET that was made before the portfolio committee on education, Martin Mulcahy, vice chairperson for advocacy for AETASA (Adult Education and Trainers Association of South Africa), said that adult education had "slipped off



the national agenda" (*The Cape Times*, 3 June 1998). According to Mulcahy, there were 11 million adult learners in the formal system and only 1 per cent of the education budget was allocated to these adults, while 99 per cent was allocated to young learners. AETASA also criticized the Green Paper on Education (1997) for not making reference to the conditions of service, co-ordination and development of Adult Education, and training practitioners. The White Paper on Higher Education (1998) was also criticized for not reflecting or intervening in issues of adult educators, trainers, and development practitioners, especially those practicing in the non-formal and informal sectors. AETASA also expressed concern over the fact that most adult learners were being taught using formal school curricula and material and that the key criteria for teaching adults were based on schoolteacher qualifications. This poses a problem. Whereas schoolteachers are qualified to teach children, the teaching of adults requires a different approach as adults have different day-to-day concerns and interests to children.

Another problem associated with ABET is that the provision of quality learning and development for adults is currently not even considered a proper and equal profession when compared with school teaching. The result is that most adult educators and trainers are forced to always be on the lookout for other work and are pursuing alternative training and development towards other, more-recognized and better-rewarded practices. This is detrimental to the field of adult learning as committed and effective educators and trainers are continuously lost to other sectors (*The Cape Times*, 3 June 1998).

Other setbacks and problems in the field of ABET were identified by Kumi Naidoo (1998). While acknowledging initial optimism regarding the eradication of illiteracy in South Africa before and shortly after the first democratic elections, he believes that there has been a subsequent drop in the morale among the key players in the adult education field. He states, firstly, that the non-governmental sector has been struck two major blows. The first is the discovery of the theft of R3 million by the former financial director of World University Service, an ABET funding conduit. Furthermore, the National Literacy Co-operation, the umbrella body of NGOs working in ABET has been closed, as the European Union (EU) withdrew its funding on the grounds of financial mismanagement and inadequate bookkeeping. A further concern is that, while the government has put in place a policy framework for ABET (a fact that was cited as a development earlier in this chapter), its realization is impeded by budgetary limitations. With the exception of workers in trade unions, the majority of adult learners have no organized expression. Most of them are poor and powerless, and many of them are women or marginalized youth living in rural areas. This makes it difficult for these adults to



benefit from government policies and funding (Kumi Naidoo, *Sunday Independent*, 28 June 1998).

While acknowledging certain positive developments in ABET, Botlhale Nong (National co-ordinator for AETASA) expressed her concern that the sector (government, funders, business and civil society) as a whole, and the position of ABET practitioners, in particular, remain vulnerable. Largely due to a decrease in funding and highly publicised fraud and financial mismanagement, the sector has lost some of the status it had gained. Another problem concerns the fact that the implementation of ABET is done at provincial level, while policy formulation and the development of norms and standards is done at a national level. She expresses her concern, yet understanding, that different provinces shift ABET from higher education- to curriculum development-, and even to special education directorates. The result is that the implementation of ABET, for the most part, is conducted independently of the national imperative. AETASA believes that, in this type of environment, neither the image of ABET nor that of the practitioner is enhanced (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998).

The State's approach to adult education greatly influences how other vital sectors, like the private sector, funders and, to some extent, civil society, view and involve themselves in adult education. Trainers and educators in the adult education field continue to struggle for recognition as professional contributors. The primary problem is that of the definition of "educator" in legislative and policy documents. It is clear that the adult educator and trainer have been left outside the ambit of these documents. While the inclusive definitions of "educator" and "trainer" in ABET-specific documents are very useful, it is not sufficient as far as legislation and policies are concerned (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998). Isaacs also comments on the low morale among adult education trainers (cited in Dladla, 2000). He attributes this to the government's failure to grant adult education trainers and teachers the status they deserve. Educators are constantly faced with insecurity regarding their jobs.

Tleane shares many of Nong's concerns mentioned earlier (*Sowetan*, 10 Sept. 1998). He accepts that, while steps have been taken to realize the provision of adult education (like the development of materials and standards by SAQA), the current ABET provision reaches only 0,01 per cent of potential learners. The lack of well thought-out and co-ordinated structures is another concern. Most provinces, with the exception of Gauteng, do not yet have statutory structures to implement adult education by having, what is known as, Multi-Year Implementation Plans. Regarding structures, Tleane suggests that there is also a lack of clarity



on where to locate adult education within the multiplicity of directorates in the different education departments.

There is also a whole range of other problems associated with ABET, of which a high dropout rate is an important one. Dladla (2000) blames this on what he believes is the fragmentation of ABET provision, the inefficiency and wastefulness of the system and its lack of relevance to people's lives. He is also critical of the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal's plans to break the backlog of illiteracy in five years. This plan has been received with mixed feelings in the ABET sector. One of the concerns is that Asmal's plan has not been accompanied by an increase in the ABET funding. ABET currently receives less than 1 per cent of the education budget.

Although a whole range of problems and setbacks have been identified in the preceding paragraphs, there are numerous suggestions as to how these problems can be addressed in order to make ABET programmes more effective and efficient. While Martin Mulcahy expressed his concern that ABET had "slipped off the National Agenda", and Nong expresses similar concern that ABET is being conducted independently of the National Imperative, Tleane (*Sowetan* 10 Sept.1999) is confident that these problems can be overcome. He advises a serious reconsideration of the current policy frameworks. Given the unevenness of the State and the capacity of the provinces to fund and co-ordinate adult education, the administration and implementation of adult education should be made a national - and not a provincial - prerogative. Secondly, more funds should be committed to adult education. While education gets the most in terms of departmental budget allocations, it is still proving inadequate in addressing the country's educational needs. There is a need to reverse the Government's macro-economic policies, as represented by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy, and its attendant austerity measures. One of the core elements of GEAR is an emphasis on the inevitability of cuts on social spending. Education is one of the sectors directly affected by GEAR, implying that access to education will become more and more expensive.

A third issue that needs to be addressed relates to the methodology of adult education delivery. The content and delivery of adult education should not just equip people with survival skills. It should give rise to a critical consciousness in learners. Among the many pedagogical options, the delivery of adult education should be through, what educationalists call, the "Problem Posing Method". The learner should develop critical thinking skills, which, over and above reading, writing and arithmetic skills, will assist in liberating and further developing the learner



as a person. According to Tlelane adult education should not just be about literacy but, above all, it should liberate.

Gugu Nxumalo, the director of adult education in the Department of Education (as reported by Dehghanpisheh) has made other suggestions as to how ABET can be made more efficient and effective. In the light of the uneven funding allocated to adults and children, he suggests that a balance needs to be found between adult education and other educational programmes, where neither is marginalized, as is presently the case with ABET. In a similar vein, AETASA's Samuels suggested that future success of ABET depends on collaboration between government, NGOs and the private sector. He explains, "If we, as a nation, are saying that adult education is important, then more members of the public should get involved ... You can't just sit back and say 'Pretoria will provide'. There needs to be a partnership between government and civil society" (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998). As far as the financing of ABET is concerned, Nxumalo cautions that when organisations, including governmental departments, work with foreign donors, there need to be strict measures as to the allocation of funds. He adds that no country can be entirely donor funded and that an increased budget should be fought for.

Project Literacy's<sup>1</sup> Miller suggests that business, organised labour and government all need to realize that there are hard economic benefits from investing in adult education (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998). Making managers aware of some of the benefits of developing the literacy skills of their employees is very important. Better communication, better understanding, better competence, and a basis from which further more specialised staff training/development can take place, are all economic benefits that the company will enjoy. As managers form an integral role in the success (or failure) of an ABET programme, persuading managers of these benefits would go a long way towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of ABET programmes. Similarly, convincing learners of the benefits of literacy, such as improved quality of life, opportunity for more specialised training, better career prospects, and so on would also improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ABET programmes (Miller, *Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998). (One must, of course, be careful not to raise unrealistic career expectations in prospective learners, especially in the short term.)

Aitchinson (*Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998) suggests another solution to ABET. He points out that increased benefits could accrue from a shift to job driven education. "For really poor people, saying 'go back to school' isn't always productive. If there were job creation projects that necessitated education, that comes as more natural spin-off than saying 'here's the



education and we'll worry about the job later'." (Dehghanpisheh, *Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1998).

Another angle to addressing the problems associated with ABET has to do with the status of the practitioner or educator. Nong (*The Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1999) suggests the following steps towards improving the status of the practitioner:

- ensuring that practitioners are recognised through employment and professional development opportunities;
- recognising the practitioner's competence and expertise; and
- highlighting their equal contribution (equal to school teachers, for example)

In summary, then, in this chapter some of the latest ABET developments that have taken place since the 1994 were examined. Many of the problems that have been identified by interest groups (for example, government, NGOs, and private enterprise), were explored, as well as some possible solutions suggested by these interest groups. The question as to whether ABET can be regarded as a success or failure is a very difficult one to answer and would no doubt attract much debate. Although there have been numerous setbacks, there have also been a lot of developments in ABET in recent years and it is encouraging to see the many suggestions as to how ABET can be made more effective and efficient. Perhaps the best way to summarize the present position of ABET in South Africa is to quote from Kumi Naidoo (1998:6): "While the adult education sector has to concede that there have been painful setbacks, we have a responsibility to keep hope alive and to rebuild on the legacy of decades of effort, commitment and creativity."

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ROLE OF ABET WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

The concept of human resources development has existed in South Africa for at least ten years, with many South African universities and technikons offering courses in Human Resource Development. The concept originated in North America and, along with Training Enterprise Councils, Local Enterprise Companies, Compacts and City Technology Colleges, was imported to the United Kingdom during the 1980s (Hughes, 1997).

Organisations throughout the world all have a common challenge that they need to address in order to survive and that is change. It is only through effective human resources development that companies will be able to successfully meet the challenges that change brings. The business environment in which all organisations operate is never static. Organisations need to keep abreast of constant technological changes. Demographic changes are inevitable, both within and outside of an organisation. The increasing number of women being employed is an example of an internal demographic change within an organisation. An example of an external demographic change is the movement of people, which may result in an increase or decrease in niche markets. Economic changes may usher in opportunities or impose restraints on companies, and political changes may bring about new laws and regulations with which companies must comply, and so on. According to Spencer and Spencer (1993:342) the following are some of the changes that are likely to take place in the future business environment: An ever-increasing pace of technological and societal change; a further shift to an information economy requiring highly skilled knowledge workers; intensifying global competition; fragmentation of markets into specialised niches; and a diversity of employees and customers from every race, sex, country, and culture in the world.

In order for any organisation to survive it needs to be able to adapt to these changes, and in order to adapt it needs people who are able to adapt. The most important agent in the process of adaptation to change in the business environment is learning. Storey (cited by Hughes in *Adults*



*Learning*, October 1997) comments as follows: "It is, indeed, the learning that people enact every day in their organisations which is seen to be the survival mechanism for the nineties organisation".

He adds that there is no doubt that learning is now commanding the attention of management and organisational theorists in a way not previously experienced. Senior management are recognising that the way an organisation learns is a key (and possibly even a determining) index to the way it innovates and remains a profitable enterprise (Maby, et al. 1999). Stata (1989) also suggests that the rate at which individuals and organisations learn may become the only sustainable competitive advantage, especially in knowledge-intensive industries (cited in Maby et al. 1999:305).

The foregoing highlights the pressures that South African industries increasingly experience to implement training for their staff members. Due to numerous companies in South Africa being very labour intensive, and these labourers generally having insufficient schooling, ABET programmes are increasingly being implemented in many South African industries.

## **2.1 The National Training Strategy Initiative, The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)**

The South African government is constantly seeking ways to alleviate one of our most important national problems, namely, illiteracy. It is estimated that of the total population of 41.5 million people in 1994, 12,5 million could be described as illiterate, that is, having little or inadequate schooling - below Standard 8 or, what is now known as, Grade 10 (National Training Board 1994). The focus of human resources development at the macro-level is therefore crucial for the economic prosperity of all South Africans. To understand the role of ABET in human resources development, we need to consider the broader national developments in training and development and thereby consider the formation of The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

During the period from 1989 to 1994 COSATU, employers, providers of education and training, representatives from the then Departments of Education and Labour, the ANC and the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) began to look at ways in which education and training in South Africa could be improved. In 1994, a task team made up of members of the National Training Board, business, organised labour, the state and providers of education



and training, was set up. After many meetings, debates and reports, a discussion document was produced in April 1994. This document was entitled A National Training Strategy Initiative (Eberlein, 1995:1). This document put forward an integrated approach to education and training for the future and also emphasised the centrality of training in the quest to ensure international competitiveness.

The key recommendation of the document was to establish the NQF. Swanepoel et al .(1998:451) describe the latter as the starting point of the National Training Strategy, which specifies learning in terms of nationally and internationally accepted outcomes. The document emphasised "... a human resource development system in which there is an integrated approach to education and training which meets the economic and social needs of the country and the development needs of the individual" (Isaacman, 1996). A year later the Government's policy document, White Paper on Education and Training, gave details of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The South African Qualification Authority Act (Act 58/1995) was passed on 4 October 1995. This law gave SAQA the power to set up and maintain the NQF.

The aim of the SAQA act is "to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework and for these purposes to establish the South African Qualifications Authority, and to provide for matters connected therewith" (Oliver, 1998:4). Swanepoel et al, (1998:454-455) views the aim of the act "... to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualification Framework and to establish the South African Qualifications Authority (Republic of South Africa 1995).

It was decided to set up the NQF in the following way: The Ministers of Education and Labour appoint the SAQA Board that will establish the NQF. There are 29 members on the board all representing different sectors, such as the trade union movement, education and training providers, non-government organisations, business and industry. Its responsibility will be to establish structures and processes to develop standards and qualification criteria on the NQF and then to approve register and publish them. It also monitors the quality of education and training by continually assessing both education and training providers and learners. The structure of the NQF is made up of 8 levels. Level 8 represents qualifications such as doctorates and further research degrees, and level 1 comprise the various ABET courses (levels 1-4) (Isaacman, 1996:6-7).



In the NQF, all learning is organised into twelve fields. These in turn are organised into a number of sub-fields. SAQA has established twelve National Standards Bodies (NSBs), one for each organised field. Members of the NSBs are drawn from six constituencies: state departments, organised business, organised labour, providers of education and training, critical interest groups and community/learner organisations. Up to six members of each of these constituencies serve on a NSB. The NSBs recommend standards and qualifications for registration on the NQF at SAQA.

Each of these NSBs is responsible for recognising, or establishing, Standards Generation Bodies (SGBs). SGBs in turn, develop standards and qualifications and recommend them to the NSBs for registration. SGBs are formed according to sub-fields, and members of SGBs are key role-players drawn from the sub-field in question. For example, the SGB for teacher educators is made up of schoolteachers, professional teacher bodies, university, college and technikon teachings staff, etc. (<http://www.saq.org.za>). Some SGBs that have been registered during 2000 by SAQA include SGBs for: Ancillary Health Care, Hygiene and Cleaning Services, Quantity Surveying, Grain, Project Management, and Economics (<http://www.saq.org.za>).

SAQA accredits education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) to ensure that the education and training that learners receive is of the highest quality. ETQAs in turn, accredit providers to offer education and training in accordance with the standards and qualifications registered on the NQF.

The ASQA Office, which is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Authority, is headed by the Executive Officer. There is a Standards Setting Division and a Quality-Assurance Division. Other divisions include a Resource Centre, Communications and secretariat, and the division for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications.

Two sets of regulations have been published under the SAQA Act to enable SAQA to oversee the implementation of the NQF: the National Standards Bodies Regulations (Government Gazette No. 18787, 28 March 1998) and the Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies Regulations (Government Gazette No. 19231, 8 Sept. 1998). In addition, SAQA has drafted criteria and guidelines for the generation and evaluation of standards and qualifications and for the accreditation of ETQAs and providers (<http://www.saq.org.za>).



The National Qualification Framework provides a means of meeting the needs of key stakeholders, namely the State, the community, the business sector, labour organisations and the providers of training (Eberlein, 1995:1). The following eight levels of training are identified by Swanepoel et al. (1998:453-454):

- Level 1 comprises a General Certificate of Education. This certificate can be obtained in two ways: either by completing compulsory schooling and thereby passing Grade 10, or by participating in Adult Basic Education and Training and passing the various Sublevels, or (what were referred to at Grindrod as) modules.
- Levels 2-4 consist of National and Higher Certificates of schooling and can be acquired in a number of ways, ranging from education at senior secondary schools, technical community colleges and private providers.
- Levels 5-8 consist of diplomas and degrees at tertiary institutions such as universities or technikons.

By considering the various levels comprising the NQF, one can develop a better understanding of the role of ABET, as far as human resource development is concerned. ABET can be described as forming the basis (level 1) from which further development (levels 2-8) can take place.

As far as human resource development is concerned, The National Training Board Report (1994) proposes to improve access to learning by greatly increasing the resources devoted to Adult Basic Education (ABE). This will be achieved by addressing the quality of learning and by integrating ABE into the National Qualification Framework.

Adult Basic Education is described as the basic phase in the provision of lifelong learning and consists of levels along a continuum of learning aimed at adults who have very little or no formal schooling (i.e. those who do not have the equivalent of a compulsory school-leaving certificate). Adult Basic Education has the potential to embrace all aspects of training which enable learners to demonstrate technical and practical competencies (Swanepoel et al., 1998:461). Huysamen (1999) refers to the total cognitive development of the human being. He says that one cannot skip phases of cognitive development or the overall long-term process (of training) will be less efficient. In South Africa, Huysamen notes, a vast number of people are formally employed, but they don't possess the basic level of literacy. Without basic literacy one can never expect these employees to understand the principles and the motives of management. Not having basic literacy skills goes further than not being able to read or write.



It has a major influence on conceptual ability and the way employees perceive things relating to the company (1999:80).

Swanepoel et al. (1998) refers to the National Training Board report (1994), which lists the basic aims of ABE as to enable individuals:

- to develop their full potential
- to participate actively in society as a whole
- to develop communications skills in their mother tongue and in English
- to develop skills in mathematics
- to shape and develop economic policies
- to build a democratic society and enhance job creation schemes
- to develop a critical understanding of their society
- to take development initiatives and understand the world of science and technology.

While the above aims are certainly very desirable, it is a sad reality that only one per cent of adults who need ABE classes are presently taking them. According to the National Training Board (1994), the key to a more effective system lies in the development of a policy framework to enable a step-by-step transition from the small-scale inefficient provision of ABE, to a large-scale, effective and coherent provision of ABE. South Africa does not have the capacity to provide ABE to 12 million people at the same time. A set of priorities should therefore be developed in order to begin to tackle the problem. Proposed criteria for selection include:

- -the most disadvantaged sectors of society
- -groups involved in key economic and development projects
- -those to whom an investment in ABET is likely to bring the greatest advantage (National Training Board, 1994:159-160).

There are presently three major providers of ABE in South Africa, namely, the private sector which is currently providing about 100 000 adults with ABE classes; NGOs are reaching some 10 000 learners per year; and the state is reaching some 110 000 ABE learners per year. The expenditure, which amounts to R200 000 annually, comes from the private sector. (National Training Board, 1994:159-160).

From the above it is clear that ABET plays a crucial role in human resources development for many South Africans, namely an entry level (NQF level 1) to further development (NQF levels



2-8). In order for South African businesses to survive in an increasingly competitive environment, it is essential that serious consideration be given to investment in ABET programmes for previously disadvantaged employees. Without ABET as a basis, millions of South Africans will miss the opportunity to develop their human resource skills and abilities.

## **2.2 The Human Development Index and ABET.**

From the previous sections of this chapter, it should be clear that, in order to survive, an organisation needs to develop its people through learning. Although literacy training is only a part of the total sphere of human resources development, literacy is a particularly good measure of the level of a country's human resource development, because it forms the basis of further development. The issue that I will now address is what the role of ABET specifically is as far as literacy is concerned. According to Maharaj (*The Star*, 24 Feb. 1998) the adult literacy rate of a nation is viewed as an extremely significant indicator of its human development potential. She points to some important measuring methods for assessing this potential that have been developed in recent years. The human development index (HDI), which was developed by the United Nations, is one of these. It facilitates the rank ordering of the level of human development of various countries. One of the determining factors used in the HDI is the level of literacy of the respective population. The United Nations -Development Programme (UNDP) developed the human development index (HDI); a measure based on life expectancy, adult literacy and income. UNDP estimates that South Africa's HDI is 0.705 (1992) out of a possible maximum of 1 (Maharaj, *The Star*, 24 Feb. 1998).

When one considers that 25 per cent of the South African population, or 9.5 million people, the majority of them black women, are illiterate, it is small wonder that, while South Africa as a whole ranks 95th out of 174 countries, on the scale of human development white South Africa ranks 24th and black South Africa 128th. Research undertaken by Media Works (a Johannesburg based company that has developed a multimedia ABET programme using local, culturally compatible material) indicates that, of the nine million people employed in the formal sector in South Africa, only four million are literate (Garrun, *The Star*, 15 Oct. 1997). The career development of the remaining five million illiterate employees is obviously severely limited.

As far as more labour intensive industries are concerned, the role of ABET in their human resource development is crucial. It would, for example, be very difficult (if not impossible) for any organisation to develop the competencies of its staff members if those staff members are



functionally illiterate. One could of course argue that certain jobs do not require literacy and that employees can be developed in those jobs without literacy. Take as an example a labourer that packs or unpacks containers in the freight industry. Some would argue that an illiterate labourer could still develop in that over a period of time the labourer will learn to pack a container more efficiently than when he/she first began. With time an illiterate labourer will also pack a container more effectively by learning better methods of packing and thereby the labourer will be able to fit more cargo into a container than before. This is an example of how a labourer can develop within his/her job over a period of time while still remaining illiterate. The argument “Why should I train employees to learn to read and write when their jobs do not require literacy skills and where their performance in that particular job can improve without literacy courses?” is an argument that I believe is still very prevalent among many South African managers. This leads to resistance and lack of commitment to ABET programmes on the part of managers.

What is important to drive home to management is just how important literacy skills are for the development of all staff members, including the staff members performing the most humble of jobs. A labourer who packs containers and who can read or write may save a company in the freight industry thousands of rands. Sometimes freight that is destined for a particular destination is packed into a container that is planned for a different destination. By being literate a labourer may notice that, according to the “Marks & Numbers” printed on the cargo, it is being packed into an incorrect container and thereby prevent a mistake that could cost a freight company thousands in claims. It is also important to consider just how much further an employee could be developed within the organisation if they were given the opportunity to become literate. Who is to say that there are not potential supervisors or even managers among a group of illiterate employees? By introducing ABET in an organisation, management is creating a platform from where staff development can take place. Instead of having to recruit new supervisors or managers from outside the company, managers will be able to recruit from within the organisation, thereby creating an opportunity for human resources development within the company. I am not suggesting that after completing ABET level 4 that an employee will be ready to become a supervisor or manager. However, after completion of ABET level 4 (and the resultant attaining of functional literacy), an employee will be able to participate in other training courses that are designed to develop supervisory or management potential in staff.



Not only does ABET form an integral role in the human resources development of employees within a company, but the development of people through ABET (or lack of development of people) have consequences that extend beyond the confines of a company or industry. ABET, for example, has a positive influence on scholars whose parents are partaking in ABET programmes. This is shown in the findings of a report, which is based on a study conducted in the U.K. in 1991, namely the National Child Development Study (Adults Learning, September 1996:10). The report found that there is a very strong relationship between parents' literacy problems and their children's abilities in reading and maths - 72% of children whose parents who had poor reading scores and low incomes appeared in the lowest of the reading ability groups. Nong (*Mail & Guardian*, 21 Oct. 1998) echoes these sentiments when she asks the question "People are assuming education takes place for eight hours a day at school. But who's going to help those children at home and who's going to read their reports?" The implementation of ABET in South African companies will therefore have benefits for the children of employees participating in ABET programmes.

Another example of how ABET extends beyond the confines of industry is cited by Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshekga who in February 1998 suggested that illiteracy is directly linked to an increase in poverty, unemployment, fragmented families and a high infant mortality rate (Vapi, *The Star*, 16 Feb.1998). Similar sentiments regarding the broad effects of human resource development through ABET are voiced by KwaZulu-Natal Education minister, Vincent Zulu. He suggests that through ABET programmes, the province could attain self-sufficiency and empower communities to be self-supportive and thereby eliminate poverty and also unemployment (Bissetty, *The Daily News*, 9 Sept. 1999).

In conclusion, it should be noted that the development of human resources through ABET does not only effect the macro-level of society, namely industry, the economy, infant mortality etc. It also improves the individual lives of all partaking in ABET programmes. There are many accounts of how ABET students have reported on the improved quality of their lives since participating in ABET programmes. Being able to interpret a map, or read on the window of a bus what route it is following, or being able to keep abreast with news, are but a few examples of the many ways in which the quality of life of ABET students is improved. Students will also attest to improved self-confidence and esteem with the acquisition of literacy skills. In the words of Annah Lekwape, a 40 year old employee at Automatic Systems Manufacturing in Johannesburg who partook in the ABET programme presented at her company "...it (ABET) opens your eyes, opens your ears - it makes you think about what you can be in life. It opens



everything to you.” (Smith, *The Sunday Independent*, 6 Sept. 1999). These positive effects of ABET on the micro-level (personal level) are well summarized by Richard O’ Brian (education planner for Richards Bay Minerals) who, speaking of the progress in ABET of a group of Kwazulu - Natal women that are being sponsored by RBM, said “They are gaining confidence and self-esteem and are now able to perform basic tasks which literate people take for granted.” (The Daily News, 9 Oct. 1998).



## CHAPTER 3

### ABET AND THE GRINDROD GROUP OF COMPANIES

Grindrod was founded in 1910 by Captain J E Grindrod, who was the grandfather of the company's present Chairman, Mr Murray Grindrod. There are over fifty branches of Grindrod in South Africa and Namibia. The company is primarily concerned with the handling of cargo, which includes all documentation required to move cargo locally and internationally, the physical movement of this cargo - whether by road, rail, air, or sea, and the storage and distribution of this cargo.

The companies comprising the Grindrod Group can be divided into

(1) The Ships Agency Division, which consists of sub-divisions: King & Sons, Grindrod Marine, Mitchell Cotts Maritime, and Grindrod Shipping Namibia. (These sub-divisions supply logistical husbandry and commercial and marketing services to ship owning principles. These sub-divisions are not very labour intensive and therefore ABET has not been implemented in any of them. The case study of Grindrod will therefore not include the Ships Agency Division.)

(2) The International Freight Division, which consists of the following sub-divisions: Grindrod International Freight, Fast Lane, and Fast Lane - Overseas Courier.

The international division controls and oversees all types of freight on an international basis from supplier to final destination. Apart from normal air and sea freight cargo movements, the International Freight division handles abnormal consignments, projects, staged consignments, warehouse and road transportation. At Grindrod International Freight (G.I.F.) division there are a few students participating in ABET. Hence it was included in the study. Fast Lane is a national and international courier and logistics operation. For purposes of this case study, Fast Lane (local services) was included, as this is a relatively labour intensive division. For clarity, when I refer to Fast Lane in the case study I will be referring to Fast Lane - local services.



(3) Transport, Cargo and Container Services, which consists of the following sub-divisions: Storm and Company, Grindrod Cargo Services, Containerlink, and Metrofile.

Storm and Company handles the transportation of various goods. The Bulk Tanker section transports bulk fuel; the Long Distance section handles the transportation and distribution of products throughout South Africa; the Harbour Transport section transports goods from ship to customer; and finally the Machine Moving and Rigging section installs and removes machines into and out of buildings. There are employees employed at Storm and Company who participate in ABET and hence it will be included in my research.

Metrofile specialises in archiving, storage and retrieval of documentation and computer backups. This division is very small and is not very labour intensive. There are no employees at Metrofile that are participating in ABET. Containerlink provides a containerisation and warehousing service to local and international importers and exporters. Containerlink is a very labour intensive division and therefore will be included in this study.

### **3.1 The need for ABET in Grindrod**

During a Directors meeting held in 1995, the directors of the various Grindrod divisions recognised that if the Grindrod Group was to survive and prosper into and beyond the year 2000, it would have to consider people as its most important asset. The directors considered the quality of employees in the various branches and came to the realisation that, in order for Grindrod to adjust to the changing political climate in South Africa and the resultant increase in international competition, it would have to embark on large-scale training programmes. These training programmes would have to be implemented on all levels in order to improve the quality of its staff and make the company more competitive locally and internationally. It was also pointed out that the demographic structure, as far as race was concerned, was not representative of a progressive company in the "New South Africa" (Hennie Richards - Executive Director Human Resources - May 1997).

Broadly speaking, the majority of the more senior positions are held by whites while the more junior positions are occupied largely by blacks. The Coloureds and Asians tend to fill those positions that are in between, such as clerical positions. As a result of this racial inequality, a decision was taken to embark on affirmative action programmes. The purpose of affirmative action as stated in the Grindrod Policy Manual (1996:2) is "to identify those employees who were previously discriminated against and, after assessment of development potential, to



provide accelerated training, education and development opportunities to them.” The manual goes on to state that “individual employees are responsible for their own success and subsequent appointments will be made primarily on the ability to do the job”.

Looking at these quotes from the Policy Manual, it is clear that ABET has been implemented to provide accelerated training and education for previously disadvantaged employees. While ABET is therefore a result of Affirmative Action Policy it is not only for Affirmative Action reasons that ABET has been implemented. As already quoted from the Policy Manual, “... appointments will be made primarily on ability to do the job”. Therefore, an equally important reason for the implementation of ABET is to develop staff members with the aim of having a more effective and competent work force.

The focus of ABET in the Grindrod Group is primarily on basic education. The emphasis is therefore on teaching employees improved reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills. It is not concerned with any particular skills training, e.g. forklift driving, container repairs, computer programmes etc, but rather with creating a competency base for the employee upon which further more-specialised training can be built.

The ABET programme in Grindrods consists of four levels which are referred to as modules. The most basic module is module 1, which is designed primarily for people who can't read or write. The modules get progressively more advanced and end with module 4. Once the employee has completed module 4 he or she will be regarded as functionally literate. The ABET programme is therefore designed to benefit those students who have little or no schooling and primarily labourers and junior staff members are selected for these courses. Given the demographic composition of staff, the majority of the ABET students are black (although in the Western Cape there is also a large portion of Coloured students). ABET is also primarily concentrated in the more labour intensive divisions of Grindrod such as Containerlink (cargo handling) and Fastlane (express delivery), which are the focus of this case study.

The aforementioned has considered why there is a need for ABET in the Grindrod Group. The previous chapter also examined how ABET fits in with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The emphasis will now shift to the role of ABET in Grindrods' mission statement.



## 3.2 The Grindrod vision

The Grindrod vision, called vision 2000, is “To become *the* Freight Transportation Group by the year 2000”. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the Grindrod Board has recognised that if Grindrods is to achieve its vision by the year 2000 it will have to “... give as many of our employees an opportunity to upgrade their skills and increase their knowledge in order to become the company we envision for the year 2000” (Hennie Richards - Executive Director Human Resources - May 1997). It was with this in mind that the Human Resources Department put together the Grindrod Education, Training and Development Plan (ETD), of which ABET is a part.

### 3.2.1 Grindrod Education, Training and Development Plan

The Grindrod ETD Plan is a people-development initiative that originated with the Grindrod Human Resources Division in July 1996. The Human Resources Division identified five key competencies in which each Grindrod employee needs to be skilled and knowledgeable, be it at different levels of complexity.

The first of the five competencies is *resources* and is described as “the effective management of time and money to complete certain tasks within budget and deadline constraints”. It also includes the ability to organise co-workers, based on personal qualities and work requirements, and to use materials and facilities effectively.

The second competency is *information* and is described as “the ability to identify and analyse relevant information and keep track of such information in an organised method”. This includes synthesizing and using a computer to manipulate information so that it can be communicated in the most effective format.

The third competency is *interpersonal*, which is described as “understanding and managing the change process in self and others, allowing the person to work objectively with others as an effective member of a team, as a trainer of co-workers, and being able to assist customers effectively”. It also includes the ability to lead, negotiate and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The fourth competency is *systems* and is described as “understanding and manipulating a procedure to produce results”. It also includes the ability to measure and improve the procedure or even design a new alternative.



The final competency is *technology* and is described as “understanding and applying the most appropriate piece of equipment for the job, maintaining that equipment in a good condition, and troubleshooting any problems for correctable solutions”.

### **3.2.2 Implementation of Grindrod ETD**

While the overall aim is that each Grindrod employee will develop the above five competencies, the extent to which these competencies will need to be exercised by the employee will be defined by the nature of the job and the position that the employee holds in the company. A forklift driver, for example, would need to possess all five competencies. However, his interpersonal competency may not need to be at the same level as that of an industrial relations manager. The forklift driver’s interpersonal skills would have to be adequate, for example, for him to know when and how to greet people or to ask a labourer to mind out of the way of a forklift in a dignified manner, but his interpersonal skills would obviously not need to be as refined as the industrial relations manager. The latter needs to negotiate wages and other work related issues with unions, perform retrenchments, or give a presentation on industrial relations matters to a board of directors. The forklift driver would, however, need to have quite good technology skills because he would need to know, for example, how to drive the forklift, what the weight lifting limitations of the forklift are, how long the forklift can be operational before it overheats etc. The industrial relations manager on the other hand may not require such in depth technology skills, but being in the freight industry he or she would at least have to know what a forklift is.

The Human Resources Department does, however, recognise that, as not all staff members would be equally competent in all the five areas, there is always room to improve or refine a competency and so there are numerous training courses. The courses are obviously designed to address the different competencies at different levels. To put it simply, in order for the Human Resources Department to identify the training needs of an individual, the nature of the job that the employee is expected to perform must first be considered. By studying the nature of the job, the Human Resources Department are able to determine which of the competencies needs to be concentrated on for a particular employee. The Department would also assess the employee’s present competencies to determine their current status (i.e. which competencies are possessed and at what level). An investigation of the job together with an assessment of the individual would, therefore, enable the Human Resources Department to determine which competencies it should concentrate on in training and at what level.



### 3.2.3 The Three Part Foundation

While it is the function of the Human Resources Department to see that all Grindrod employees work towards attaining all five key competencies, this poses a major challenge. The challenge is that the labour intensive divisions, such as Fastlane and Containerlink, have numerous employees who are not yet ready to be trained in all of the key competencies. The reason for this is that many of the employees in these labour intensive divisions are illiterate or at least functionally illiterate (reading skills of less than Grade 9 level). Quite obviously, one cannot hope to train an employee in the five competencies if he or she is barely able to read or write.

As numerous staff members find themselves in this position and are thus not yet ready to be trained in the five competencies, the Human Resources Department has had to devise a plan to make them ready for competency training. This plan is called The Three Part Foundation, and proposes that before an employee is ready to be trained in all of the five competencies they should possess three foundational competencies. The first of these competencies is the cluster of *basic skills*, which are described as

- (i) the ability to read, write, and speak English
- (ii) to listen, understand and interpret messages
- (iii) to perform basic arithmetic calculations and to
- (iv) develop the ability to think cognitively.

The second cluster of the foundational competencies are *thinking skills*, which are described as the ability to

- think creatively,
- solve problems,
- make decisions,
- assess consequences by evaluating options and
- to visualize, reason and know how to learn.

The third and final cluster of foundational competencies is personal qualities, which are defined as the ability to display

- responsibility,
- sociability,
- self management,
- integrity and



- honesty.

It is within the context of these foundational competencies that ABET plays an important role. The role of ABET is to teach the first of the foundational competencies, namely basic skills. The course material of ABET is geared to teaching Grindrod employees to speak, read, and write English. The higher levels of ABET, namely modules 3 and 4, also concentrate on teaching thinking skills and personal qualities, which are the other two foundational competencies.

In conclusion then, as far as the Human Resources Department's Education, Training & Development programme is concerned, ABET is responsible for providing one of the three foundational competencies. Thus the role of ABET is to prepare the foundation for Grindrod employees to be trained in any or all of the five organisational competencies (The Grindrod Training & Development Plan 1997).

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## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the objectives of the study and to give an overview of the research design. I also discuss what instruments were used and how I went about collecting the data. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the selection of the procedures used to analyse the data and how the analysis was actually carried out.

The central hypothesis of this thesis is that it is the attitude of managers who have students participating in ABET programmes, and the attitudes of these students themselves towards ABET, that account for the success or failure of such ABET programmes. I arrived at this hypothesis on the basis of my own experience of the ABET programme within the various Grindrod branches in the Western Cape. Some of the managers were very supportive of the programme and showed a keen interest in the programme, while others were less supportive and took little interest. The same was also noticeable amongst the ABET students. Some students were keen to attend class and seemed to enjoy the lessons, while others often missed class and eventually stopped attending classes altogether.

It was my firm belief that managers who took an interest in, and were supportive of ABET acted in this way because of their positive attitudes towards ABET, and students who regularly attended class did so because of their positive attitudes towards ABET. The reverse also seemed to hold true. Poor class attendance and a high drop out rate among students could also be attributed to less positive attitudes of these students towards ABET. It was for this reason that I decided to conduct a study on what factors may have an influence on the attitudes of managers and students towards ABET.

Before I could consider factors that may influence management and student attitudes I had to determine what the attitudes of the managers and students towards ABET were. These attitudes were measured on a scale of 0 – 100.

I then began to consider which variables may or may not have an influence on management attitude towards ABET. I looked, for example, at whether the age of the manager has an



influence on the attitude of the manager towards ABET. Other variables that were considered included the length of service of the manager at Grindrod, the education qualification, status and political orientation of the manager. The same exercise was performed on the students and variables such as age, length of service at Grindrod, previous school standard completed and status were considered.

#### **4.1 Selection of samples**

Having identified various branches of Grindrod, and the divisions under which they fall, I identified the population groups within these branches and divisions that needed to be targeted to obtain the relevant data. Not all of the Grindrod divisions were selected because ABET was not in operation at all the branches. This is because not all the branches were very labour intensive and the entry level for some of the more administrative branches was at least functional literacy. There was therefore no need for ABET at these branches. Those Grindrod branches that were more labour intensive and had large numbers of functionally illiterate staff members were identified in the study. There are two important groups of people in a company who are involved in an ABET programme. Firstly, there are the managers who take the decision to implement ABET, and secondly, there are the employees (ABET students) who participate in the programmes. These two groups in each company of the Grindrod group were the target populations. As these were two very specific groups of people and not very large populations, I attempted to include as many of the members of these two groups as was practically possible, within the time frame and the constraints of my work. As I had planned to do all the fieldwork myself, there were no other limitations on the “selection” of these “samples”, and there was no particular selection method applied other than the availability and willingness of the managers and students to be interviewed.

##### **4.1.1 Selection of manager sample**

I began investigating all the branches of Grindrod throughout the country where ABET was in operation. These branches included the Cargo Handling, Express Delivery, and Clearing and Forwarding divisions. (The Clearing and Forwarding Division is also sometimes referred to as the International Freight Division.)

##### **4.1.2 Selection of student sample**

The student sample comprised all the students who filled out the questionnaire. The data collection took place in 1998 and all the students who were participating in ABET during that year were given questionnaires. None of the educators who administered the questionnaires at the various Grindrod branches reported any students who did not want to fill in the



questionnaires. While some of the students may have been absent on the days that the questionnaires were presented, about 80 per cent of the students participating in ABET in 1998 filled out the questionnaires.

## **4.2 Instruments and issues of measurement**

The attitudes of managers and students were measured by making use of the Lickert scale. In the case of the managers, the Lickert scale formed part of the structured interview schedule. The interview schedule was decided on because I had direct access to the managers. The students' attitudes were also measured by making use of the Lickert scale, but in this instance, the scale formed part of the structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was chosen because I would not have been able to interview all the students in all the regions where grindrod branches were in operation (More detail on the items comprising the Lickert scale will follow in Section 4.2.2.).

The following variables were chosen in order to determine whether they had an influence on the attitudes of managers and students. In the case of the managers, the variables included: length of employment at Grindrod, age, educational level, political orientation and status. The reasons for selecting these items as variables were influenced by previous research on management behaviour.

Research by Hicks (in Mullins, 1999:326) in the hotel industry, for example, shows that irrespective of personal circumstances (age, gender, education, social class) managers had been exposed to a process which had "encultured" them to a shared understanding of the industry, resulting in common attitudes on a range of topics. The years that the manager has been employed at Grindrod (and the resultant extent of enculturation) might therefore have had an influence on his or her attitude towards ABET.

Mullins (1999:824) also suggests that there is a tendency for some people to find a sense of security in the past. In times of frustration or difficulty, or when faced with new or unfamiliar ideas or methods (e.g. the implementation of ABET) people may reflect on the past. It is for this reason that the age of the manager was considered as a variable, as the extent to which managers may have reflected on the past may have varied with the length of their past (i.e. their age).

As far as the variable of educational level of the manager is concerned, the Equity Theory (cited by Steers and Stewart Block, 1994:167) supports the reason for examining educational level of the managers. The Equity Theory rests on two assumptions about human behaviour.



Firstly it assumes that individuals engage in a process of evaluating their social relationships towards others. Social relations are viewed as an exchange process in which individuals make contributions or investments and expect certain outcomes in return. Secondly, it assumes that people do not assess the equity of an exchange in a vacuum. Instead they compare their own situations with those of others to determine a balance. Determining the extent to which an exchange is satisfactory is thus influenced by what happens to oneself compared with what happens to others. With this Equity Theory in mind, a manager with less than a matric may have compared his own situation to that of his subordinates participating in ABET and feel threatened. A manager with a tertiary qualification may have assessed such a situation as a non-threatening one and be more able to give his support to ABET.

As far as the variable political orientation is concerned, I relied on common wisdom to make this choice, against the backdrop of recent political trends in South Africa. Faced with a society in rapid transition, it seemed likely to me that those managers who were politically more conservative would have been less supportive of an initiative like ABET which clearly is aimed at empowering people (previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies) through literacy training and education.

Du Plessis (1997:157) comments on the effects of a period of transition, by pointing out that South African society still has to deal with many of the consequences of the previous government's policies which will take years to rectify. Training of previously disadvantaged communities through ABET is one of the many ways of addressing past inequalities. Political orientation was therefore chosen as a variable to determine whether more conservative managers would be more inclined to resist such programmes than more liberal managers.

With regard to the students, the variables chosen were the years of employment at Grindrod, occupational status, ABET module currently being taken and the school standard completed.

The reason for choosing the years of employment was the same as for the managers (extent of "enculturation", as referred to above).

Occupational status was chosen as I believed that attitudes between clerical staff and labourers may have been different. This variable is closely related to the school standard completed as Lockyer (1993:118) found this to have an influence on attitudes towards employees towards training (although in that case, it was assertiveness training). She found that the lack of education was one of the most prominent contributors to the lack of



assertiveness among black people. I thus considered that lack of education may have also made ABET seem a more intimidating prospect for those with lower levels of education.

Although I was unable to find any research on whether the ABET module that the student is on may have an influence on his/her attitude towards ABET, I nevertheless believed that there may well be a connection and hence decided to include ABET module as a variable. In the same light the school standard completed was also chosen as a variable that may influence student attitudes, although I was unable to find any research pertaining to previous schooling and attitudes towards ABET.

#### **4.2.1 Structured interview schedule for managers**

A structured interview was used to gauge the attitudes of the managers towards ABET and to gather information about the demographic characteristics of the managers, such as the managers' age, sex, length of service in company, political orientation etc. These demographic characteristics were then regarded as variables.

Most of the questions in the interview were closed-ended questions. Managers were, for example, asked to identify which age category they fell into, or to identify their length of service by selecting the most appropriate category (less than 1 year; between 1-3 years, and so on). There were also a few open-ended questions as well, which allowed managers to express their own feelings and ideas. The interview schedule was designed so that managers would also have the opportunity of identifying any problems they may have been experiencing in the implementation of ABET. This also provided an opportunity for managers to make suggestions as to how some of these problems could be solved. An example of the interview schedule can be seen in Appendix 1.

#### **4.2.2 Structured questionnaire for students**

A structured questionnaire was used to gauge the attitude of students toward ABET, as well as the problems they were experiencing and what some of their suggestions were as to possible solutions. (A copy of the student questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 2).

As with the managers, I was convinced that the attitudes of the students were central to the successful implementation of ABET programmes. The structured questionnaire was therefore designed to measure the attitudes of the students towards ABET. Given that these students were and are still only in the process of learning to read and write, the questionnaire was a lot simpler compared with the questions used in the interview schedule of the managers.



### **4.3 Data collection methods**

#### **4.3.1 Interviews with managers**

I decided not to make use of the postal system as some of the questions on the interview schedule were of a personal nature. I felt that I could better explain to managers why certain questions were being asked when speaking to them face-to-face. Because the management “population” was relatively small, I also could not afford to take the risk of managers not responding to postal questionnaires.

The research started with an investigation of all the managers in the Cargo Handling, Express Delivery, and Clearing and Forwarding Divisions throughout the country where ABET was in operation. A total of 23 managers were interviewed, all of whom I interviewed personally.

##### **4.3.1.1 *Western and Eastern Cape***

The initial research among the managers started in the Western Cape. This was geographically the most sensible place to start as I was stationed in the Western Cape and hence any problems or difficulties could be identified and rectified before interviewing managers in other parts of the country. I could always ask to re-interview a manager in the Western Cape but it would have been far more difficult to do this with managers in other parts of the country. So in a sense, the Western Cape interviews fulfilled the functions of a pilot study. Fortunately, the interviews went as planned and there was no need for me to re-do any of the interviews.

The interviews of the Western Cape managers started in December 1997. It was relatively easy to get appointments with the managers, as I was able to see them at times that were convenient for them. The initial population in Western Cape consisted of the General Manager, the Branch Manager, and the Export Manager of Containerlink. The Branch Manager, as well as the Operations Manager of Grindrod International Freight, were also interviewed at this time, as was the Branch Manager of Fast Lane Division.

I was also fortunate enough to be able to interview the Branch Manager of Containerlink, Port Elizabeth, while he was on business in Cape Town and did not conduct any further interviews with managers in the Eastern Cape.

##### **4.3.1.2 *KwaZulu-Natal***

The managers of the Grindrod divisions in Durban were interviewed during March 1998. In this instance, time was limited as I only had one day to do these interviews. If a manager was unable to see me on that day, or if the manager was ill or on leave it obviously had a limiting



influence on the number of managers I was able to interview. A total of nine managers were interviewed. At Containerlink the managers consisted of a Director, the General Manager, two Operations Managers and a Senior Operations Controller. At Storm & Co, the managers available were a Divisional Manager, an Operations Manager and two Supervisors.

#### **4.3.1.3 Gauteng**

In May 1998, I interviewed a total of seven managers in Johannesburg. Enough time was spent with each manager to obtain the data that I needed. The sample population consisted of The Grindrod Human Resources Director, the Regional Manager of Grindrod International Freight, the Branch Manager and the Warehouse Supervisor of Containerlink City Deep, and the Branch Manager, Operations Manager and Cargo Controller of Containerlink, Denver.

#### **4.3.2 Administration of the student questionnaire**

Data on the students were collected during 1998. The structured questionnaire was given to students to complete while they were attending their regular ABET classes. A total of 54 students completed the questionnaire. It is, however, important to point out, at this stage, that the questionnaires were handed out to the students all over the country by the educators. I therefore did not have the control over the administering of these questionnaires as I did when interviewing managers. I was also only able to access the students that were actually participating in the programme at the time and not the students that had dropped out or refused to participate in the programme. The reason for this is that the educators around the country did not have access to these employees, and I believed that they would, in any case, have been less willing to fill in questionnaires pertaining to ABET. As I was unable to access the students who had dropped out of the programme, it was recognised that this may have an influence on the findings of the study. In an effort to address this shortcoming, I managed to conduct follow-up interviews in August of 1999, with some students that had dropped out of the ABET programme.

The educators were asked to distribute the questionnaire and to assist students where assistance was needed. Some of the Module 1 and 2 students required assistance in understanding how to complete the questionnaire. It was, however, stressed that the ideas and views of the students had to be their own and that assistance could only be in the form of helping students to understand and fill in the questionnaire.

Data on the students were collected during July to September 1998 at Grindrod divisions throughout the country. Educators were briefed on the administration of the questionnaires



during business trips undertaken to those regions. The questionnaires were distributed and completed over the period of about three months.

#### ***4.3.2.1 Data collection in the Western Cape***

The initial data collection took place in the Western Cape. A total of eight ABET students completed the questionnaire. Of the eight students, four were from Containerlink (three labourers and a forklift driver). One of the students was employed at Grindrod International and worked as a tea lady. The remaining three students were employed at Fast Lane and were all van attendants. Of the eight students, four were participating in ABET Module 1, while one student was on Module 2 and three were on Module 3.

#### ***4.3.2.2 Data collection in the Eastern Cape***

At Containerlink in Port Elizabeth, a total of eight students participating in Module 1 completed the questionnaire. (Modules 2, 3, and 4 had still not been implemented in Port Elizabeth at the time.) Most of these students were either truck drivers, forklift drivers or labourers.

#### ***4.3.2.3 Data collection in Gauteng***

A total of 13 students at Containerlink in City Deep (Johannesburg) completed the questionnaire, of whom eight were participating on ABET Module 1. These students consisted of a welder, a yard attendant, a cleaner, two packers, a security guard, and two drivers. There were four students participating in Module 2 - a security guard, a welder, and two forklift drivers. There was only one student participating in Module 4 and this student worked as a checker. (The role of a checker is to ensure that all cargo is loaded into a container according to a packing list. If cargo is unloaded he or she must ensure that there is no cargo missing and that all cargo is in accordance with the manifest (a document detailing the contents of a container).)

#### ***4.3.2.4 Data collection in KwaZulu-Natal***

Finally, there were a total of 25 ABET students who completed the questionnaires in Durban. Of the 25 students, 24 were employed at Containerlink and one was a student at Mitchell Cotts. A total of 13 students who were participating in ABET Module 1 completed the questionnaires. These students consisted of one checker, three labourers, five drivers, a tally clerk, a welder, a grinder, and an artisan assistant. There were seven Module-2 students. They comprised a mechanic, four drivers, and two labourers. Finally, the Module-3 students



totalled five and consisted of a general assistant, a labourer, a messenger, and two drivers. There were no Module-4 students.

In 1999, follow-up interviews were conducted with a further seven students. The main purpose of the follow up interviews was to identify problems that the students associated with ABET and what their suggested solutions to these problems were.

#### **4.4 Measuring the key variables**

The questionnaire was also designed to place managers' attitude on a continuum from 0 to 100, where the point 0 represents the most negative attitude towards ABET, while the point 100 represents the most positive attitude. The way in which the attitude of the manager was determined was by asking the manager to respond to various statements regarding ABET. For each statement the manager was asked whether he or she (1) strongly agreed, (2) agreed, (3) was uncertain, (4) disagreed, or (5) strongly disagreed. Each response category was given a score on a scale of 1 to 5. A manager, for example, who indicated that he or she strongly agreed with the statement "ABET is beneficial for the development of all students participating in the programme", would score a 5. A manager who strongly disagreed with the statement would score a 1. The above statement is an example of a positive statement where a "strongly agree" response scores a 5 and a "strongly disagree" response scores a 1. Statements expressing a negative attitude towards ABET were also included, and in such instances, "strongly agree" responses would score 1 and "strongly disagree" responses would score a 5. For example, a manager who strongly agreed with the statement "ABET is nothing but a waste of company production time", would score a 1 and a "strongly disagree" response would score a 5. The occasional swapping of positive and negative statements allowed for control of acquiescent bias.

Students' attitudes were also gauged on a scale of 0 to 100 (with 0 representing the most negative attitude and 100 representing the most positive attitude). As with the managers, the characteristics (variables) of the students were also obtained and correlated with their attitude. I was then able to see whether some of the characteristics of the students e.g. age, length of service in company, status in organisation etc. have an influence on students' attitude.

In the case of the student questionnaires, the attitude of the students was gauged on a 10-item scale. Each item was in the form of a statement. As with the managers, the students were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, were uncertain, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with a statement. The attitude of the students was measured on a scale of 0 to 100. This



method was exactly the same as the method used to gauge the attitude of the managers, as explained in detail earlier.

## **4.5 Data analysis**

The SPSS statistical programme was used in the analysis of data. All of the demographic data of the managers were entered into the SPSS system and measured against the scores (0-100) of the attitudes of the managers. The ages of various managers, for example, were plotted on the x-axis and their corresponding scores for attitude (0-100) were plotted on the y-axis, in order to see whether a pattern existed showing that age had an influence on attitude. The same exercise was then performed using other data, such as length of service and political orientation.

### **4.5.1 Approach to data analysis**

My first interest was to consider the mean attitudes of managers in a particular category. I took, for example, the mean attitude (average attitude) of all the managers that fell within a particular age group. This was then compared with the mean attitude of managers that fell within another age group. In doing so, I would be able to see if there was a relationship between age and attitude by identifying whether there was a particular trend or pattern on the graph.

Although an investigation of means provides useful data, the variance of attitudes amongst managers is also important. To exclude variances and only consider the means may have resulted in inaccurate or “skewed” data. Many managers, for example, may have fallen within a particular category and a small group in another category. To calculate the mean of 15 managers falling within a particular age group and then to compare that with the mean attitude of one or two managers falling into another age category would have been problematic. While the mean attitude of a particular group of managers was X, there may have been a considerable variance of attitudes within that particular group. My methodology, therefore, also considered the variance of managerial attitudes between different categories, as well as the variance of managerial attitudes within categories.

In comparing these variables to the attitude of managers, I hoped to be able to suggest a profile of a manager who was typically more likely to support ABET. This information could be useful, in that ABET suppliers would be able to obtain certain information about the characteristics of managers before an ABET programme is launched in a particular company, and thereby get an idea of what the likely managerial attitude of that particular company's



managers towards ABET would be. This would not only put me in a position to determine which managers would be more likely to support ABET and vice versa, but also enable me to suggest what possible actions should be taken to change managers' attitudes.

The analysis of the student data was done in much the same manner as with the management data. As with the managers, the data was measured against attitude, this time the attitude of the student.

#### **4.5.2 Reliability analysis**

It was essential that the reliability of the management interviews and student questionnaires be tested. The main purpose of the interview and the questionnaire was to gauge the attitude of students and managers as a predictor of successful implementation of ABET programmes. The interviews and questionnaires would have been of no value at all if the test was not reliable.

Each individual item included in the questionnaires was tested for reliability<sup>1</sup>. (By "item" we are referring to each statement on the questionnaire that tested the attitude of the manager or student). I will not present a detailed analysis of the results of the reliability analysis, as this can be viewed in page 1 of Appendix 3, but will present the overall internal consistency reliability of the attitude test. According to the test, the "overall internal consistency reliability of the 10 item scale used to assess the student's attitude towards ABET classes is 0.75. This can be interpreted as acceptable reliability".

#### **4.5.3 Factor analysis**

In addition to the reliability analysis, a factor analysis was also conducted. The purpose of this was to determine the dimensions underlying the 10 attitudinal items. A principal component method of extraction was used together with a varimax rotation. Three factors were identified, namely,

- 1) company culture-related attitude,
- 2) personal gratitude and appreciation, and
- 3) perceived uselessness.

The statements in the 10 attitudinal items that loaded the first of the three identified factors, namely, "company culture related attitude" were:

Item 3: "ABET has made me more proud to be working for this company",

Item 6: "I only attend class to keep the managers happy" and

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<sup>1</sup> The reliability analysis was conducted by N Boshoff.



Item 8 “I would be quite happy if ABET were to be stopped in the company”.

The second factor, namely “personal gratitude and appreciation”, was loaded by the following items:

Item 5 “I feel that I have benefited from the ABET course that I’m attending” and

Item 9 “I am very pleased that the company has given me the opportunity to participate in ABET”.

Finally the items that loaded on the third factor, namely, “Perceived uselessness”, were

Item 2: “ABET is actually a waste of time” and

Item 4: “I only attend class so that I can get out of doing my normal tasks for a while”.

Characteristics of the students such as age, gender, job title, etc. were also considered in order to determine whether a relationship existed between these student characteristics and their attitudes towards ABET. For a more detailed look at the reliability analysis, factor analysis and attitudes vs. student characteristics, refer to Appendix 3, pages 1-5.

As far as the management interviews are concerned, the results of the reliability analysis for the 20-item attitudinal scale for line management shows that the overall internal reliability coefficient is 0.89. This can be interpreted as strong reliability. Again each of the 20 items was tested for reliability. The results of the individual items can be viewed in Appendix 3, page 6.

The relationship between the various management characteristics and their attitude towards ABET was also analysed. It was pointed out earlier that the sample population of the line managers consisted of only 23 respondents. In fact, because of the small sample population, very few significant differences in the attitudinal scores of the line managers were detected. I will nevertheless present these differences, however slight, in the chapter devoted to the analysis of the data, Chapter 5. More detailed information of the reliability analysis is provided in Appendix 3, pages 6-8.

The following 2 chapters will focus on the attitudes of the managers and students and we will investigate possible influences on those attitudes, determine problems associated with ABET, and identify possible solutions.



#### **4.6 Limitations of manager sample**

The fact that the total sample population of the managers numbered only 23, excluded the possibility of sophisticated statistical analysis. I, therefore, recognised that I would not be able to make statements as to the causal effects of the variables on the attitudes of managers. What I would be able to do, however, is to explore the characteristics of managers that may or may not have had an influence on their attitudes towards ABET (i.e. attitudes and characteristics that co-occurred).



## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF MANAGER DATA

#### 5.1 Management attitude towards ABET

In this section I will discuss my findings regarding the attitudes of the various managers in the Grindrod Group towards ABET. In Chapter 4, it was mentioned that the total population sample of managers numbered 23. Before analysing the data that were collected from this population sample, I will give a brief profile of the managers.

##### 5.1.1 Socio-demographic profile of the managers

Although the status of the managers interviewed varied substantially from supervisors to directors and from individuals with three or four subordinates to individuals with over a hundred subordinates, all of these managers had two things in common. ABET is in operation in their respective working places and they all have subordinates who are participating in the ABET programme as students. (For purposes of clarity, even individuals in the sample population who do not actually bear the title manager, e.g. Supervisor or Cargo Controller, were still regarded as managers as they had subordinates reporting to them.)

###### 5.1.1.1 Sex

All of the managers in the sample were male.

###### 5.1.1.2 Length of employment at Grindrod

Most of them had been employed at Grindrod for three years or longer (see Table 5.1). In fact only one manager had been employed for less than three years while 13 of the managers had been employed for more than eleven years. The managers in the sample population were therefore generally well acquainted with Grindrod.



**Table 5.1 Length of employment at Grindrod**

Years in operation	Number of managers
less than 3 years	1
4-5 years	6
6-10 years	3
11 years or more	13
Total	23

**5.1.1.3 Age**

While the ages of the managers mainly vary from between 30 to 60, the great majority of the managers fall within the age categories of 40-49 and 50-59 years (See Table 5.2). The sample population of managers can therefore be described as generally middle-aged and even slightly older.

**Table 5.2 Age of managers**

Age in years	Number of managers
30-39	5
40-49	7
50 –59	10
Total	22*

\* Data missing for one manager.

**5.1.1.4 Educational qualifications**

As far as education qualifications are concerned, we do find some variance among the managers. Education qualifications vary from the grade 10-11 category to diplomas and postgraduate qualifications (see table 5.3). Only a few managers, however, fall into the above categories. The vast majority obtained matric as their highest qualification.

**Table 5.3 Educational level of managers**

Educational level	Number of managers
below Grade 12	4
Grade 12	14
post-Grade 12	5
Total	23



#### 5.1.1.5 *Level of status*

As mentioned earlier in this section, the status of the managers in the Grindrod organisational hierarchy varies considerably, from supervisors to directors. In general, though, most of the managers in the sample population can be described as occupying middle management positions in the organisational structure. Generally speaking the number of subordinates that report to a manager gives a rough idea of the seniority of the manager within the organisation. To obtain an indication of the status of the managers I considered the number of subordinates that report to the manager. This data is shown in table 5.4

**Table 5.4 Number of subordinates per manager**

Number of subordinates	Number of managers
Less than 21	4
21-30	4
31 or more	15
Total	23

The next section examines the relationship between management attitude and the variables identified in the management questionnaire, namely length of operation, years employed at the company, political orientation, total number of subordinates, age, and highest education qualification.

#### 5.1.2. **Length of operation and management attitude**

Our investigation will start by considering whether the length of time that ABET had been in operation in a particular company has had an influence on the managers attitude towards ABET. We refer to the graph Figure 5.1. (Attitude [Mean] by years in operation). The graph shows that where ABET had been in operation for less than a year, the mean attitude of the managers was the most positive (just less than 88), and where ABET had been in operation between 1 to 2 years, the mean attitude of the managers was at its lowest (75). Where ABET had been in operation for between 3 to 5 years, the mean attitude of the managers increases slightly (just above 76).



Management

Figure 5.1

Attitude (mean) by years in operation

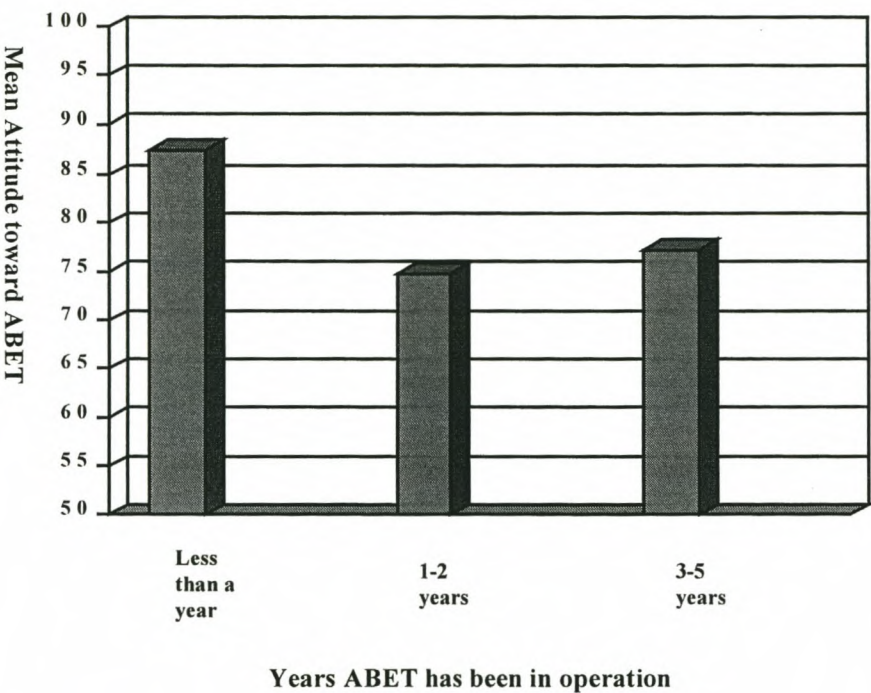


Figure 5.2

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
YRSINOP	1	Less than 1 year	87.5	3.5	2
YRSINOP	2	1-2 years	74.8	13.9	6
YRSINOP	3	3-5 years	77.3	6.4	15
For entire population			77.5	9.0	

Total Cases = 23



Although the graph shows no linear pattern, the length that ABET had been in operation may well have influenced managerial attitude towards ABET. It makes sense that the most positive mean attitude of managers was found where ABET had been in operation for less than a year. As with most new ventures in life, people tend to be positive or motivated. One would therefore expect that the mean attitudes of managers where ABET had been in operation for between 1 to 2 years was lower than the mean attitudes of managers where ABET had been operating for less than a year. The graph concurs with this.

This argument, however, does not explain why the mean attitude of the managers where ABET had been in operation for between 3 to 5 years was slightly more positive than the mean attitude of managers where ABET had been in operation for between 1 to 2 years. One would have expected the mean attitude of managers where ABET has been operating for between 3 to 5 years to be lower than where it had been operating for only 1 to 2 years.

A possible reason for this may lie in the nature of the ABET programme itself. The ABET programmes are long-term programmes and the benefits of ABET for the students and the company are not something that occurs overnight. Teaching an illiterate person to read and write takes years. The benefits or positive results of ABET programmes may only be evident years after its initial implementation. This is perhaps why the mean attitude of the 3 to 5 year managers is marginally higher than the mean attitudes of the 1 to 2 year managers, because the benefits of ABET (e.g. improved literacy, communication skills and competence) are being experienced to a greater extent after 3 years than after only 1 or 2 years.

It would be interesting to see what the mean attitude of the managers is where ABET has been in operation for longer than 5 years. I believe it would be higher than the mean attitude for the 3 to 5 year managers. Unfortunately, no ABET programmes had been run for longer than 5 years in any of the Grindrod divisions at the time of data collection.

A study of the variation (Figure 5.2) among the managers shows that the managers who fell into the first category (less than 1 year) had quite a small variance (3.5355). This would suggest that almost all managers share a similar attitude towards ABET in the initial stages of an ABET programme. Unfortunately, there were only two managers that fell within this category and hence one cannot be too sure that this will, in fact, always be the case. Within the other two categories the variance is quite large (13.8768 and 6.4195). It is important to take note of this



because it suggests that differences between management attitudes within both these categories are quite large. One should therefore not assume that all managers are necessarily either always less positive towards ABET where the programme has been running for quite some time than managers where it has been in operation for less than a year.

### **5.1.3. Political orientation and management attitudes**

The third variable that was considered was that of political orientation (Figure 5.3). For purposes of this study political orientation was divided into three categories, that is, Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative. When being interviewed, managers were asked to indicate whether they perceived themselves as politically liberal, moderate, or conservative. In this instance, the graph shows a distinctive pattern. In the case of the liberal and moderate managers, the mean attitude of managers is around 78, while the graph shows a drop in the mean attitude (just below 76) in the case of the conservative managers.

One can put forth many ideas as to why more politically conservative managers may be less positive toward ABET than moderate and liberal managers. Perhaps more politically conservative managers do not feel it is their, or the company's obligation to assist in the uplifting of previously disadvantaged employees. More moderate and liberal managers may be more open to ABET programmes and see it as an opportunity to develop the potential of staff members.

It is, however, not the purpose of this thesis to explain why more conservative managers have a less positive attitude than liberal and moderate managers. What is important is that the data shows that political orientation does seem to have a small influence on managerial attitude towards ABET, with more conservative managers having a slightly less positive attitude than moderate and liberal managers.

I refer also to the Description of Sub-populations - Political Orientation (Figure 5.4). In the Liberal population, the variation between managerial attitudes is small (3.4641). This would suggest that almost all managers with a liberal political persuasion are positive towards ABET, a suggestion that is easy to support from experience. The variation within both the moderate and conservative samples is quite large (around 10 in both cases). This suggests that while political orientation may well have an effect on management attitude toward ABET, there are many managers within the moderate and conservative population who would be exceptions to



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Figure 5.3

Attitude (mean) by political orientation

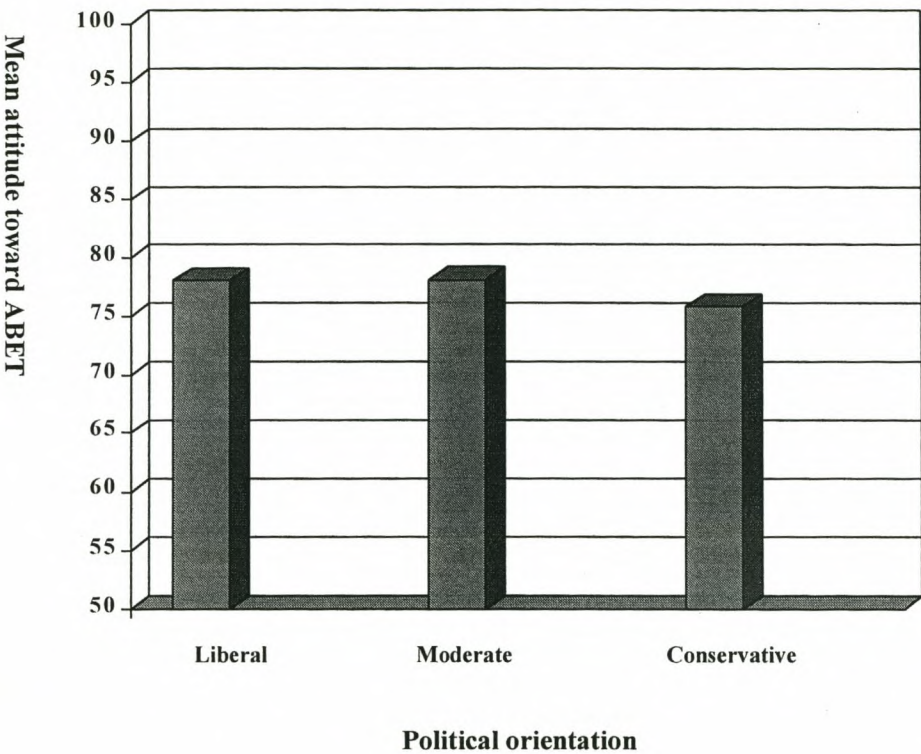


Figure 5.4

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
POLORIER	1	Liberal	78.0	3	4
POLORIER	2	Moderate	78.0	10	13
POLORIER	3	Conservative	75.8	10	6
For entire population			77.5	9	23

Total cases = 23



this. In other words, numerous conservative managers may be more positive towards ABET than moderate managers. In conclusion then, it would appear that political orientation does have a minor and ambiguous influence on management attitude towards ABET.

#### **5.1.4. Status and management attitudes**

As mentioned previously, the reason for including the number of subordinates as a possible influence of attitude towards ABET was because the number of subordinates reporting to a manager was used to give a rough indication of the status or level of the manager in the organisational hierarchy. In most instances, managers with more subordinates have a higher status than managers with less subordinates. Also, in most companies, the fewer subordinates the manager has, the closer that manager is to the operations or the "floor" of the company. An Operations Manager, for example, may have 10-15 subordinates reporting to him or her. He or she will often be on the floor to ensure that the operations of the company run smoothly. A general manager, on the other hand, may have 100 subordinates reporting to him or her from all over the country and therefore could not possibly spend as much time on the "floor" as an operations manager. It stands to reason then that an operations manager who has ten subordinates, of whom five are off the "floor" because they are attending an ABET class, is making a far greater sacrifice and being far more negatively effected by this than a general manager who has a similar number of subordinates away on a course, as well as tens of others reporting to him from all over the country. The pressure in such an instance is on the operations manager who is directly affected by ABET, and not the general manager. It therefore is plausible to say that the closer the manager is to the actual operations (floor) of the company (as indicated by fewer subordinates) the less positive a manager is likely to be towards ABET. On the other hand, the more the manager is removed from the actual operations (as indicated by more subordinates) the more positive the manager is likely to be towards ABET.

The fourth variable, then, to consider is that of total number of subordinates (Figure 5.5). The X-axis has the number of subordinates listed as less than 21; 21-30; and more than 31 subordinates. The graph clearly shows that the managers with the smallest number of subordinates (less than 21) had a less positive attitude (just above 74) than the managers who had more subordinates. The managers with 21-30 subordinates showed a mean attitude of just under 81 and the managers with 31+ subordinates had a mean attitude of around 78. Although the managers with the most subordinates had a slightly lower mean attitude than the managers with 21-30 subordinates, what is important is that the managers with the fewest subordinates clearly have the least positive attitude (just above 74) towards ABET.



Management

Figure 5.5

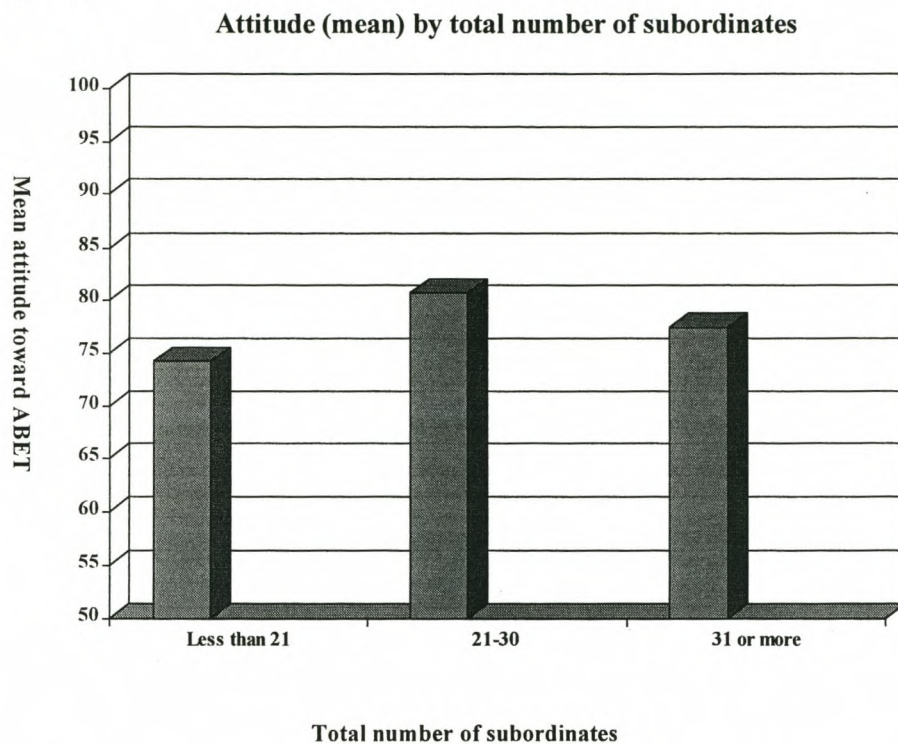


Figure 5.6

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
NSTAFFRP	1	Less than 21	74.2	10.8	4
NSTAFFRP	2	21-30	80.7	2.6	4
NSTAFFRP	3	31 or more	77.5	9.7	15
For entire population			77.5	9.0	23

Total Cases = 23



An analysis of Figure 5.6, shows that within the category "less than 21" the standard deviation is as high as 10.8743. This suggests that while managers with fewer subordinates generally are more negative towards ABET than managers with more subordinates are, there may be a lot of managers with few subordinates that do, in fact, have a very positive attitude towards ABET. The variation within the second group of managers (21-30 subordinates) is small (2.6300). This group of managers also had the most positive attitude towards ABET (80.75). It would appear that, with few exceptions, managers that have between 21-30 subordinates are mostly very positive towards ABET. What is surprising is that the managers with the most subordinates (31+) have a large variation (9.7678) among themselves. Due to this large variation one could expect to find managers within this group having varying attitudes towards ABET.

A possible explanation for this is that managers with 31+ subordinates are generally in very senior positions and mainly consist of general managers and directors. As explained earlier, this group of managers may not be directly effected by the operational disruptions of ABET, but they are more likely to be effected by the financial implications of ABET. The managers that fall into the category 21-30 subordinates are often branch managers who are not accountable to the same degree for the financial implications of implementing ABET, as general managers and directors (who are the policy makers).

In conclusion, although the reasons for the variation among the managers in the group having 31+ subordinates is mostly speculation, it does appear that those managers who have the least subordinates and who are generally closest to the "factory floor", tend to be more negative towards ABET compared with those managers with more subordinates who are generally more removed from the "factory floor".

#### **5.1.5. Years employed at company and manager attitudes**

The next consideration was whether the number of years that the manager has been employed by the corporation had had any influence on attitudes towards ABET (See Figure 5.7). Again, our Y-axis shows the mean attitude of the manager towards ABET and the X-axis shows the years that the manager had been employed in the corporation. The X-axis is marked less than 5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years.

The mean attitude of the managers with less than 5 years service is close to 78, whereas that of managers with 6-10 years service is just above 80. In the case of managers with 11 or more



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Figure 5.7

Attitude (mean) by years employed at corporation



Figure 5.8

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
	1	Less than 5 years	78.1	10.5	7
	2	6-10 years	80.3	4.6	3
	3	11 or more years	76.5	9.3	13
For entire population			77.5	9.0	23

Total population = 23



years service, the mean attitude drops to just below 77. It would appear that length of service does not influence the attitude of the manager towards ABET in a linear fashion. Thus managers with 6-10 years service have a more positive mean attitude towards ABET than managers with less years service, as well as managers whose length of service exceeds 10 years.

An interesting phenomenon that is revealed in the graph is that the managers with the most years service (11 or more) had the most negative attitude towards ABET. A possible explanation for this is that managers with 11 or more years' service are likely in many, or most, instances to be older managers who have passed the peak of their careers or that may be approaching retirement. A plausible explanation for this could be that a manager, having passed the peak of his or her career and/or being close to retirement, may be a lot less inclined to have a positive attitude towards a new and challenging programme (like ABET), than a new manager who aspires to higher positions and plans to be in the employ of the company for years to come.

As a conclusion, I would suggest that while managers who have been employed at the company for many years (11 or more) may be less positive towards challenging projects than managers who have been in the company for fewer years.

Figure 5.8 shows that there is a large variance within the sample, which suggests that no attitude is dominant in any of the groups based on length of service. Even in the group 11+ years the variation is high.

#### **5.1.6. Age of managers and management attitudes**

The next variable I considered is that of the age of the manager (Figure 5.9). Three age categories were identified, namely, 30-39, 40-49 and 50+. Again, the Y-axis shows the mean attitude of the managers toward ABET. The findings indicate that managers within the age group 30-39 have the highest mean attitude (just below 84) while managers aged 40-49 have a mean attitude that drops to around 70.

At this point one would be inclined to consider that age might have influenced managerial attitude and that the older the manager the less positive he or she was likely to be towards ABET. Any such consideration, however, is totally contradicted by the finding that the oldest managers (50 years and older) have a mean attitude (around 80). This is far higher than the



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Figure 5.9

Attitude (mean) by age

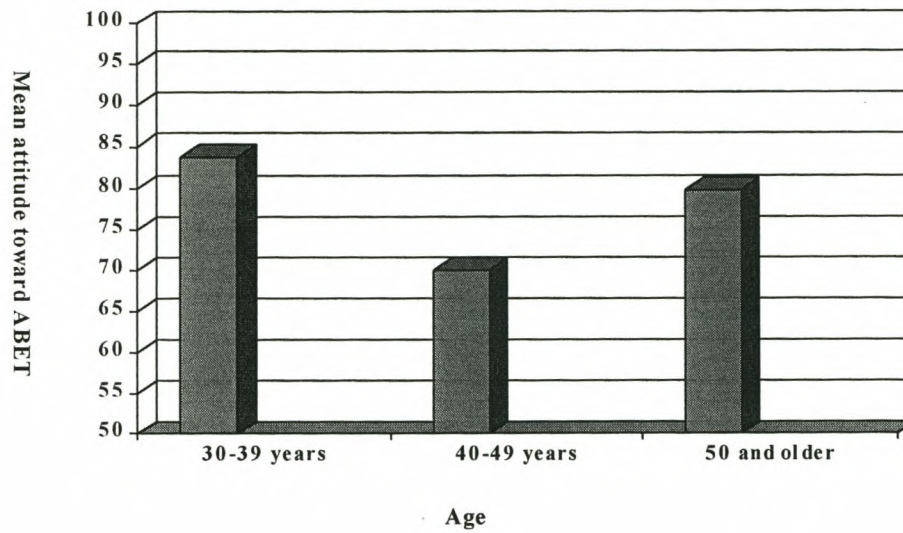


Figure 5.10

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
AGE	1	30-39	83.8	3.9	5
AGE	2	40-49	70.0	9.7	7
AGE	3	50 and older	79.8	7.5	10
For entire population			77.5	9.2	22

Total cases = 23

Missing cases = 1 or 4.3 Pct



middle-aged managers. The Attitude (Mean) by Age graph (Figure 5.9) shows no clear linear pattern or tendency. This does not necessarily mean that age does not influence attitudes of managers, but it does make it difficult to suggest reasons why the attitudes of managers in the 40-49 age group had less positive attitudes than both younger and older managers. A possible explanation is that managers in the 40-49 age group have reached the peak of their careers and have less time on their hands and more responsibilities than younger managers, or older managers who are reaching the end of their careers.

This SPSS description of subordinates (Figure 5.10) shows a large variation between the different population groups. It is only the age group 30-39 that has a low standard deviation (3.9623), which suggests relative uniformity in attitude among that sample.

#### **5.1.7. Level of education and management attitudes**

The final variable to be considered is the Highest Educational Qualification (Figure 5.11). Three educational levels, namely below Grade 12, Grade 12, and post Grade 12 were identified. The Y-axis, once again, shows the mean attitude of the managers. The findings suggest that the managers with the lowest level of education (below Grade 12) had the least positive attitude towards ABET, while the managers with the highest level of education (post Grade 12) had the most positive attitude toward ABET.

A possible explanation as to why managers with less than Grade 12 had the least positive attitude is because they themselves are poorly educated and may feel threatened by ABET, and would hence have a less positive attitude. The converse is also true when it comes to the managers that are the most qualified. They have obviously placed a lot of emphasis on their own education and consequently it would stand to reason that they would have a more positive attitude towards the further education of their subordinates. An ABET programme is also unlikely to be perceived as a threat to a manager with a post Grade 12 qualification.

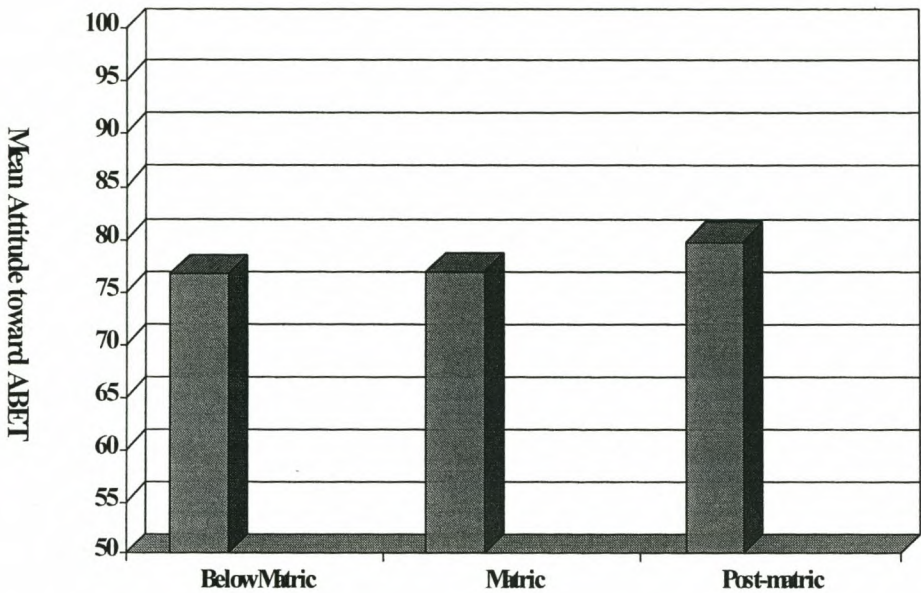
An examination of Figure 5.12 shows that within the samples there is a relatively low variance in the post-Grade 12 population (4.0866), suggesting relative uniformity in attitude toward ABET among managers with post-Grade 12 qualifications. The variance among the other two groups is relatively large (Below Grade 12 -6.2383 and Grade 12 -11.0207). In both of these population groups then, one can expect to find the attitudes of managers varying from not so positive to very positive towards ABET.



Management

Figure 5.11

Attitude (mean) by highest educational qualification



Highest educational qualification

Figure 5.12

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
EDUCAR	1	Below matric	76.7	6.2	4
EDUCAR	2	Matric	76.9	11.0	14
EDUCAR	3	Post-matric	79.8	4.0	5
For entire population			77.5	9.0	23

Total cases = 23



In conclusion then, it would appear that the education qualification of the manager does have an influence on management attitude toward ABET, with the most positive attitudes found almost always among managers with a post Grade 12 qualification.

### **5.1.8 Summary of the influence of variables on management attitudes**

Finally, at the beginning of this chapter I explained that, due to the small sample population (23 managers) I would not be able to make any conclusion regarding causal relationship between independent variables and the attitudes of the managers towards ABET. What I am, however, able to do is make suggestions as to what factors may or may not exert an influence on the attitude of managers towards ABET. It would appear from the study that factors such as length of employment and the age of the manager do not have a linear influence on their attitude towards ABET. This does not mean that age or length of service have no influence on attitude, but from the findings, I cannot say with certainty that the older the manager or longer he or she has been employed, the more or less positive his or her attitude towards ABET will be. On the other hand factors such as the length of implementation of the ABET programme at a particular branch, political orientation of managers, status (measured in terms of total number of employees) and the level of educational qualification do appear to have a linear influence on management attitude towards ABET.

## **5.2 Managers' views on ABET.**

Up until this point, only quantitative data has been used in my evaluation of the attitude of managers towards ABET and the factors which may have had an influence on these attitudes. I will now concentrate on the qualitative data which reflects the managers' views of ABET in their respective divisions, the problems they identified, as well as the solutions they recommended. This information was obtained during the interviews of managers using open-ended questions.

### **5.2.1. Benefits**

#### **5.2.1.1 Improved communication**

Of the 23 managers that were interviewed during 1998, a total of 18 managers indicated that they believed that ABET programmes have had benefits for their respective divisions. By far the most frequent of the benefits cited was improved communication between employees and managers. Considering that many of the ABET students were black, and the fact that most managers and supervisors could not speak a black language, it stands to reason that managers



would be able to communicate better with subordinates if both managers and subordinates were conversant in English.

#### **5.2.1.2 Improved motivation**

Another benefit that was mentioned by at least 50 per cent of the managers was that of improved motivation and morale among the students. Although not all of the managers specifically used the words “motivation” and “morale”, they implied that this was in fact the case. One of the managers explained motivation and morale in the following words:

*ABET has had the effect of making employees more enthusiastic and has created a more positive attitude among employees. Employees are also more conscientious in their jobs.*

Another manager cited *improved morale and better quality of work* as being a benefit, while a third manager said:

*As a result of ABET, employees have a more positive attitude and are more motivated.*

#### **5.2.1.3 Identification of development potential**

The fact that ABET made it possible to identify staff development potential was also cited by many of the managers. Comments to this effect were:

*The company can identify the potential in the student. ABET enables succession planning and is proof of (enables) promotion from within the company.*

*ABET gives students opportunities.*

*ABET is a start to further development.*

*I am now able to promote staff.*

#### **5.2.1.4 General benefits**

Finally, on the point of perceived benefits of ABET, managers mentioned the following benefits:

- *ABET has been a team builder*
- *... more efficient operations*
- *... drop in absenteeism*
- *... don't have to translate (to subordinates)*
- *... employees become wiser and therefore better representatives of the company.*  
*They develop more inquiring minds.*
- *... more stable work force. Labourers can advise drivers on street names. Staff can now read packages.*



- ... better spelling, able to write.
- Employees understand products better. They understand broader business picture.
- Employees now know the meaning of the word production ,
- Students have more self respect. Make less mistakes.
- Staff can read and speak and sign for documents.
- Students have a more holistic understanding of work.
- Company has received a lot of credit and acknowledgement from clients...  
Honoured social obligations and clients see this as a requisite. Company has received credit and acknowledgement from staff.

### 5.2.2 Problems

As far as problems identified by the managers are concerned, by far the most common problem cited was *operational disruptions*. Of the 23 managers interviewed, 15 mentioned operational disruptions as being a problem associated with ABET. The fact that ABET classes in Grindrod took place during working hours meant that, for two hours a week employees were attending class. Most classes ran for an hour and classes were usually twice a week. Even other problems cited by managers could be seen as a spin off of operational disruptions, as is evident from the following statements:

- More casuals need to be employed (to compensate for students attending class). This results in additional labour costs.
- Staff doing the same job (as students) have to 'double up' and this causes over working of staff, which, in turn, causes frustrations.
- Service levels are negatively affected.
- Profits are affected.

The only other problem that was cited by management that was not in some way connected to operational disruptions has to do with industrial/labour relations. One of the managers stated that employees "get back at the company through boycotting ABET".

### 5.2.3 Solutions

As far as solutions to the problems associated with ABET are concerned, not many ideas were put forward by the managers, primarily because almost the only problem identified was operational disruptions. By far the most common suggested solution was for ABET classes to take place outside of working hours. Of the 15 managers that identified operational disruptions as a problem, 10 suggested classes after working hours. Other possible solutions were made by



managers who suggested the taking on of more casual labour, and who felt that more lessons with smaller classes could alleviate operational disruptions. Both these suggestions would, of course, have cost implications for the company. The taking on of more casuals would increase the staff complement that has to be paid. More classes would also result in increased costs because the educators get paid for each lesson they present, so the more lessons there were, the more the company would have to pay.

### 5.3 Follow-up interviews

During August 1999, follow up interviews were done with five of the managers in the Western Cape. Of the five managers, two had been interviewed in 1998 and three were being interviewed for the first time. The purpose of these interviews was to get a more in-depth idea of their perceived benefits, problems and solutions pertaining to ABET. While the original questionnaire used in 1998 was again used, more emphasis was placed on the questions pertaining to the benefits, problems and solutions during the actual interview.

Both the managers that had been interviewed in 1998 stated then that they did not believe that ABET held any benefits for the company. In the 1999 interview both of these managers reiterated their initial viewpoint. They both, however, believed that ABET did have benefits for the *individual* employee. In the words of one of the managers: "There have been individual benefits to the students such as the fact that they have become literate and understand better, but there are no benefits to the company as such." Better understanding related to filling in forms (for example, bank documents), being able to read the price of goods in a shop, or knowing which routes busses travel because their destinations could be read etc.

Both managers still saw operational disruptions as a problem. One of the managers went into more detail on operational disruptions. He explained that it was not just the fact that the student was in class for an hour that caused a disruption. Students still had to collect their books in their lockers and after class, books needed to be put away again before going back to work. This resulted in the student being unproductive for periods of 15 minutes both prior to and after class. The manager also explained that "ABET breaks the routine of the day and makes people lethargic". As to potential solutions to the operational disruptions, both managers repeated their suggestions that ABET classes be held after working hours.



Of the three managers who had not been previously interviewed, one felt that ABET did have benefits for the company. She stated that ABET had resulted in "... improvement in work (of students), that is, the students were able to use more initiative...ABET also allowed for internal development which hence saves the company money". (Interesting that she too was the only female manager!)

The other remaining two managers felt that ABET held no benefits for the company and explained why they felt this way. In the words of the managers:

*A lot of ABET was discontinued.*

*Many students did the ABET course to get out of work.*

*ABET had no relevance to the company.*

*Cost production money.*

*Unrealistic.*

*Just a new buzzword.*

*ABET held no benefits because it was not job related.*

*Most people on the programme could read and spell anyway.*

*Labourers anyway preferred speaking in their own (black) languages.*

Of the three managers that were interviewed for the first time, the same manager who believed that ABET did hold benefits for the company also stated that she had experienced no problems regarding ABET. The other two managers stated operational disruptions as being a problem. On the point of operational disruptions, one manager said that "staff run on a skeleton basis, therefore (when students are in class) contract staff must be hired and this is disruptive". The other manager said that ABET caused "operations disruptions, especially with key people at critical times".

Finally, as far as solutions to the operational problems are concerned, one manager suggested that ABET classes should be "... after hours so that the sacrifice is real, and if commitment is real, the individual plus the company can benefit". This manager also suggested a change of the entire content of the programme in order to make ABET programmes more job related. The other manager also suggested having ABET classes outside of working hours and suggested that course content be more job orientated.

In conclusion, the ideas put forward by the managers, as well as their reports on how they have experienced ABET with in their respective divisions are of great significance in the study of the



dynamics of ABET with in Grindrod. All of these managers have had subordinates partaking in the programme and hence have all in some way or another been effected by the implementation of ABET in Grindrod.



## CHAPTER 6

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DATA

#### 6.1 Students' attitude towards ABET

The aim of this chapter is to consider factors that may have had an influence on students' attitudes towards ABET. The following variables will be examined: years of employment, occupational status, ABET level, and school standard completed. Before these variables are examined, a brief demographic profile of the students will be presented.

##### 6.1.1 Socio-demographic profile of students participating in ABET

###### 6.1.1.1 Length of employment of students at Grindrod

The majority of the students were well acquainted with their respective divisions. Of the 52 students who responded to this section of the questionnaire (see Table 6.1.), only one student had less than 1 year service at Grindrods. There were seven students who had been employed at Grindrod for one to two years, while the remaining 44 students had all been employed at Grindrods for three years or longer. In fact, of the remaining 44 students, 19 had been employed there for 11 years or longer.

**Table 6.1 Length of employment of students**

<b>Years in Operation</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
less than 1 year	1
1-2 years	7
3-5 years	15
6-10 years	10
11 or more years	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>



**6.1.1.2 Age of students**

As far as the ages of the students are concerned, the population can be described as predominantly middle-aged and older students (see Table 6.2). Of the 51 students that responded to the “age” section of the questionnaire, only 2 were younger than 30 years old. A total of 21 students fell within the age group of 30 to 39 years old. Of the remaining students, 14 were between 40 to 50 years, and 13 students were between 50 to 59 years. Only 1 student was older than 60.

**Table 6.2 Age of students**

Age	Number of students
younger than 30	2
30-39 years	21
40-50 years	14
50-59 years	13
older than 60	1
Total	51

**6.1.1.3 Educational qualifications of students**

The education qualifications of the students varied substantially and are indicated in Table 6.3. At the one end of the scale, two students indicated that they had no schooling at all. A further two students had completed Grade 1, where three students had completed Grade 2. Eight students completed Grade 3 while a further five students had completed Grade 4. There were five students had completed Grade 5, seven students indicated that they had completed Grade 6, while eleven students indicated that they had completed Grade 7.

As far as high school standards are concerned, two students had passed Grade 8 and another two students had completed Grade 9. Of the remaining students, five indicated that they had passed Grade 10 and one student had completed Grade 11 and one completed Grade 12.



**Table 6.3 Level of education of students**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
No Schooling	2
Grade 1	2
Grade 2	3
Grade 3	8
Grade 4	5
Grade 5	5
Grade 6	7
Grade 7	11
Grade 8	2
Grade 9	2
Grade 10	5
Grade 11	1
Grade 12	1
Total	54

**6.1.1.4 Occupations of students**

Fifty two of the 54 students indicated their occupation on the questionnaires (see Table 6.4). It would not be feasible to mention the job titles of all 52 students, so I will describe them in broad categories, which are used in industry. Sixteen of the students fell into the category of “labourer”. Twenty one of the students fell into the category of “driver”. The category “driver” included all forklift and truck drivers and van attendants. Eight of the students fell into the “artisan” category. I have included job titles such as welder, grinder and mechanic in this category. Two of the students fell into the “security” category and the remaining five students were either in clerical or supervisory positions.



**Table 6.4 Occupations of students**

Occupation	Number of students
Labourer	16
Driver	21
Artisan	8
Security	2
Clerk/Supervisor	5
Total	52

**6.1.1.5 ABET modules**

Finally as far as the respective ABET Modules that the students were partaking in is concerned (see Table 6.5), the majority of the students (thirty-three) were on Module 1, a total of twelve students were partaking in Module 2 and eight students were on Module 3, while only one student was on Module 4.

**Table 6.5 ABET Modules**

Level of Module	Number of students
Module 1	33
Module 2	12
Module 3	8
Module 4	1
Total	54

**6.1.2 Years of Employment and student attitudes**

I will now consider whether the years that the student has been employed in the company may have had an influence on the student's attitude towards ABET. Figure 6.1 is divided into less than 2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11 or more years. The graph shows that students with the least years employment (less than 2 years) were the least positive towards ABET (just below 83), and those students with the most years service (11 or more) had the most positive attitude towards ABET (95). The graph shows a distinctive trend that suggests that the longer the student had been employed in the corporation the more positive their attitude toward ABET was inclined to be.



Students

Figure 6.1

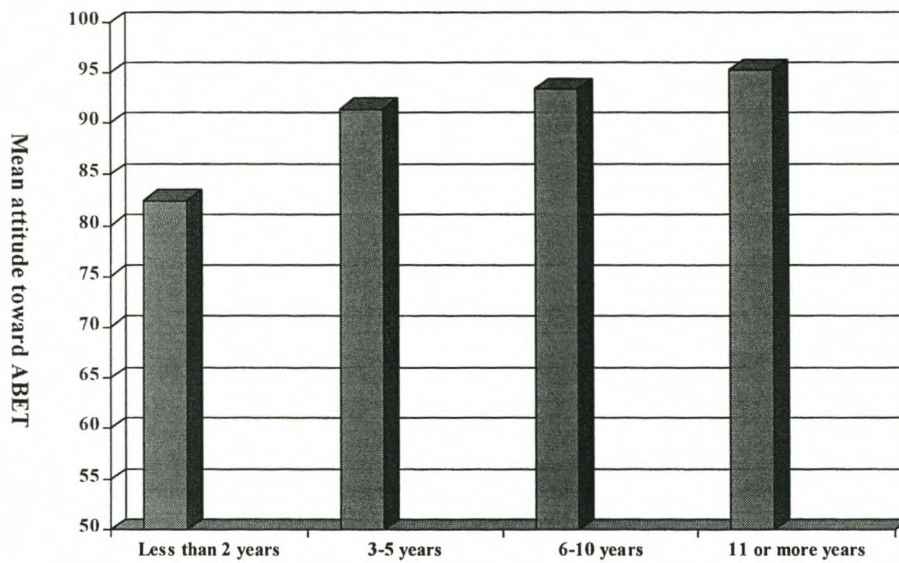
**Attitude (mean) by years in corporation****Years employed at corporation**

Figure 6.2

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
YRS@CO	1	Less than 2 years	82.5	9.8	8
YRS@CO	2	3-5 years	91.4	7.6	15
YRS@CO	3	6-10 years	93.4	8.9	10
YRS@CO	4	11 or more years	95.3	6.1	19
For entire population			91.8	8.6	52

Total cases = 54

Missing cases = 2 or 3.7 Pct



A possible explanation for this is that employees who had been in the corporation for many years are aware that such a programme had never been implemented before and they were therefore aware of the uniqueness of the programme. An employee who had not been in the company for long may have thought of ABET as just another of the many training programmes that have been or will be embarked on. They may, therefore, not have appreciated the uniqueness of the ABET programme and this may have had a less positive impact on their attitude towards ABET. However, this is debatable. What is, nevertheless, important is the fact that student attitude towards ABET became more positive as the student was employed in the company for a longer period.

An investigation of Figure 6.2 reveals that there is a relatively large variation within the population groups (between 6.1 and 9.8). One should therefore be cautious about assuming that a student with less than 2 years service at a company would necessarily have a less positive attitude towards ABET than a student with 11 or more years service. After an investigation of the graph and SPSS description of Subpopulations I concluded that while length of service is a possible influence on student attitude, the high variance among students with the same length of service means that it cannot be assumed that all students with the same length of service would have similar attitudes. The influence of length of service should be seen as a very general.

### **6.1.3 Occupational Status.**

The next aspect that I will consider is whether the position or status of the student in the organisational hierarchy had an influence on the attitude of the student towards ABET. The way in which I determined the status of the student was by looking at their job titles. The job title is assumed within the organisation to give a relatively accurate indication of this.

Figure 6.3 indicates a distinctive trend that suggests that as the students status in the organisation increases, their attitude towards ABET becomes more positive. The mean attitude of the labourers is just above 89. The mean attitude of the van attendants and drivers rises to just above 92 and the mean attitude of the clerical workers rises to just above 95.

A possible explanation for this is that as one moves higher up in the organisational hierarchy, the more literate one is expected to be. A labourer, for example, may be less inclined to want to



### Students

Figure 6.3

Attitude (mean) by job title

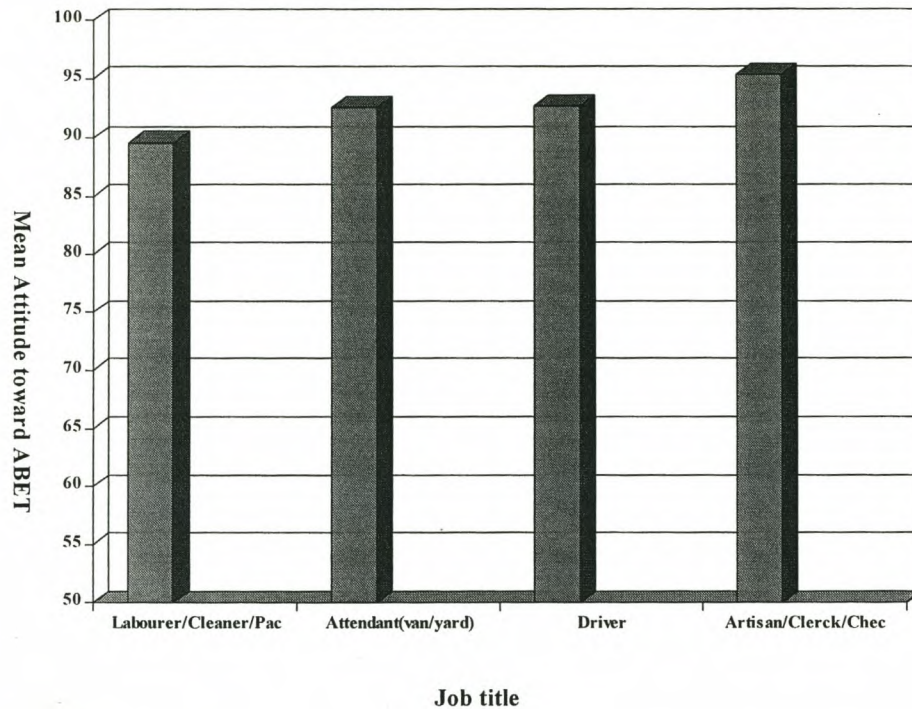


Figure 6.4

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
JOBTITLE	1	Labourer/Cleaner/PAC	89.6	10.2	16
JOBTITLE	2	Attendant (van/yard)	92.5	6.9	8
JOBTITLE	3	Driver	92.6	8.6	19
JOBTITLE	4	Artisan/Clerck/Chec	95.3	7.9	9
For entire population			91.1	8.8	52

Total cases = 54

Total missing = 2 or 3.7 Pct



learn to read and write because in many instances labourers are illiterate and this does not jeopardize their employment within the company. At the other end of the scale, a clerical staff member would be motivated to improve on his or her reading and writing skills as they form an essential part of their day-to-day work.

Another explanation for the increase in mean attitude with the increase in status could be peer pressure and competition. A labourer may be far less motivated to participate in ABET when many of his or her peers are illiterate than in the case of the clerk where all his or her peers would have some level of literacy skills. However, regardless of these explanations, it is clear that the status of the student within the organization exerts an influence on the attitude of the student towards ABET, probably because the higher the status of the student, the higher are the literacy demands of the job. It is important to note that the most negative attitudes towards ABET were just below 90, which is really negative only *when compared with* other more positive responses and it should not assume that the labourers' attitude was necessarily negative towards ABET in general terms.

An investigation of the variation (Figure 6.4) shows that the variation among students with the same job titles is also relatively high (between 6.9076 and 10.2299), therefore I concluded that while status does appear to have an influence on the attitudes of students towards ABET, it should not be assumed that nearly all students with the same job titles all have similar attitudes towards ABET.

#### **6.1.4 ABET Module and student attitudes**

The next factor that I considered was whether the Module (Level) that the student was on would influence the attitude of the student.

An investigation of Figure 6.5 suggests that the level of the ABET module on did not have an influence on the attitude of the student towards ABET. Module 1 had a comparatively lower mean attitude than Module 2 (91 vs 96) and yet Modules 3 & 4 (Modules 3 & 4 have been included as one item due to low numbers of students) had a comparatively low mean attitude when compared with level 2 (90 vs 96). If the level of the ABET module influenced attitude I would have expected the graph to suggest or show a trend of mean attitude either increasing or decreasing along modular lines. The graph certainly does not show such a trend and this leaves me to suggest that the level of ABET module does not influence the attitude of the student towards ABET.



Figure 6.5

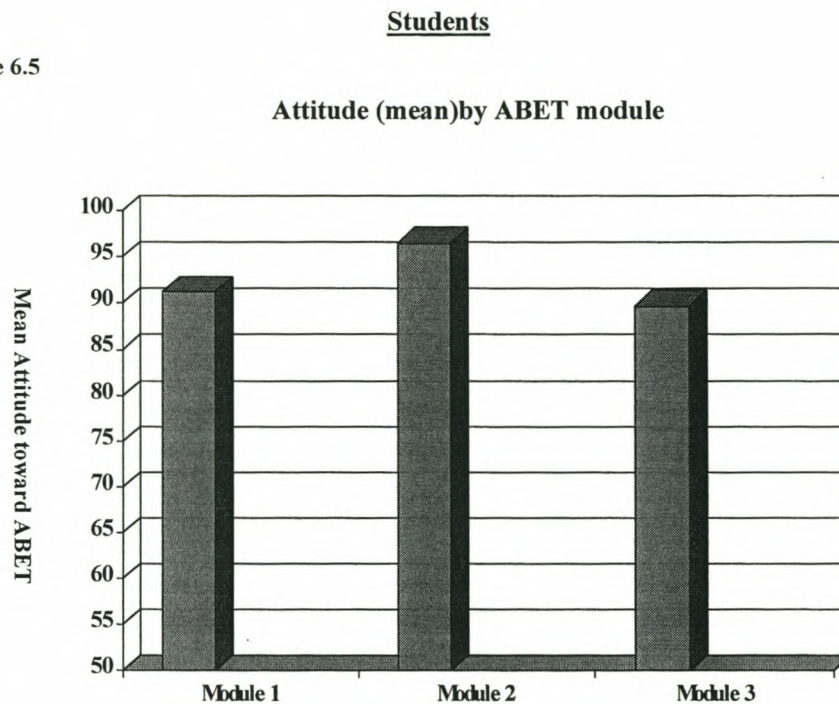


Figure 6.6

**ABET module being done**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Label</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std Dev</u>	<u>Cases</u>
MODULE	1	Module 1	91.2	8.9	33
MODULE	2	Module 2	96.5	7.0	12
MODULE	3	Module 3	89.7	8.0	9
For entire population			92.1	8.6	54

Total cases = 54



The variation (Figure 6.6) within the populations is also high (between 7.0903 and 8.9713) and the fact that no pattern is shown on the graph means that no influential affect can be deduced from the standard deviation statistics in this case.

#### **6.1.5 Level of education and student attitudes**

Finally I considered whether the level of education of the student (before ABET) had an influence on the attitude of the student towards ABET.

In Figure 6.7 I plotted the school standard completed over four categories namely: none; Grade 1 to Grade 5; Grade 6 to Grade 9; and Grade 10 to Grade 12. At a glance, one could be forgiven for suggesting that the school standard that the student has completed has no influence on the attitude of the student towards ABET. This is because the graph shows no discernible pattern. Students with the least and highest school standards completed both had comparatively less positive attitudes than students in the categories Grade 1 - Grade 5 and Grade 6 - Grade 9. This suggests that the graph shows no pattern or tendency.

A closer investigation, however, may in fact reveal that the level of education did have an influence on student attitude towards ABET. The graph shows that students who had had “moderate” schooling i.e. Grade 1 - Grade 5 and Grade 6 - Grade 9 had a slightly higher mean attitude towards ABET (92.4) than students with no schooling (91) or students with higher standards, i.e. having completed Grade 10-12 (91.2). When one considers that ABET consists of 4 levels and the highest level (Module 4) is the equivalent of Grade 9 (Functional Literacy) then it stands to reason that students that fall into the category Grade 10-12 would have a less positive attitude towards ABET than students that fall in the category Grade 6-9 (or Grade 1 - Grade 5). This is because a student with a Grade 10; 11; or 12 may feel that they are participating in a training programme that gives them a lower qualification than the schooling standard that they have already completed, (even though their schooling may have been of a poor standard due to the then governments education policy for people of colour). Students with lower standards of schooling, on the other hand, may have felt that they were progressing and increasing their education levels while students with Grade 10; 11 or 12 may have felt that they were not achieving much.

At this point it is important to point out that each employee who was interested in participating in ABET was assessed to determine the appropriate Module for the employee. The reason why



Students

Figure 6. 7

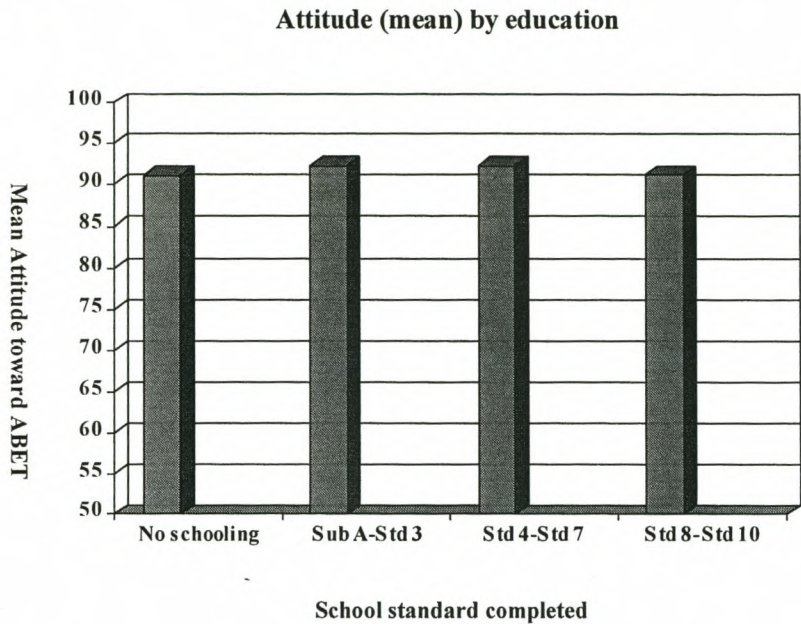


Figure 6.8

Variable	Value	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
EDUCAT	1	No schooling	91.0	1.4	2
EDUCAT	2	Sub A-Std 3	92.3	9.7	23
EDUCAT	3	Std 4-Std 7	92.3	8.1	22
EDUCAT	4	Std 8-Std 10	91.1	8.7	7
For entire population			92.1	8.6	54

Total cases = 54



students with a Grade 10; 11; or 12 are still sometimes eligible for ABET is because of the poor standard of schooling they received in their formative years.

A possible explanation as to why students with no schooling have a comparatively lower mean attitude than students with moderate schooling is because for adults with no schooling a literacy course would be a lot more daunting than for students who already have learnt some of the basics of literacy. It is, however important to point out that the difference mean attitudes between the students is very small (around 1-2 percentage points) and hence while school standard completed may have an influence on attitude, the influence is not very strong.

There is a very low variation, namely 1.4, (Figure 6.8) in the no-schooling sample which suggests that most students in this sample had similar attitudes. Unfortunately, there are only 2 students in this sample and I could therefore not make much use of this figure. The relatively high standard deviation in the other populations (between 8.1798 and 8.7831) lead me to conclude that while educational level may have had an influence on students' attitudes, this influence is a very general influence.

In conclusion then, after studying the various attitude graphs of the students and Description of Subpopulations (Standard Deviations), it would seem that the years employed in the corporation, status (as measured by job title), and educational level do have a slight influence on the students' attitude towards ABET, while the level of the module that the student is taking (1 - 4) has no influence on student attitude.

## **6.2. Student's views on ABET**

In this section the views of the students are explored, as collected in the qualitative part of the questionnaire. The questions in this section of the students' questionnaire were all open-ended to allow students to freely express their ideas. I will consider the benefits of the programme that they identified as well as the problems and suggested solutions to these problems.

### **6.2.1 Benefits**

Of the 53 students included in the study during 1998, a total of 51 of them stated that they believed that they had benefited from the ABET programme. (The other 2 students did not fill in that particular section of the questionnaire). Of the 51 students, the vast majority listed such benefits as: being able to write English, speak English, read English, and understand English.



Below are just a few quotes from what the students wrote about the benefits they received from ABET, mostly in unedited form:

- *The ABET did help me. (Module 1)*
- *learned to read and write English...can speak better English.*
- *ABET gave me learning aid material...have one hour to learn while at work...have become more motivated to my work. (Module 1)*
- *I understand manager's when they speak to me...I improve English...Now I learn English better...Now I can write English...I can see the cargo in the warehouse." (Module 2)*
- *I can speak English...I understand manager...I can read English properly...I can read newspaper...I can read and write now. (Module 2)*
- *My English sentences I can write better...I can read better...I can communicate better. (Module 3)*
- *My English has improved...I can read better now...I know how to handle clients. (Module 3)*
- *I have improved of reading and writing...Understanding the clients reports...Understanding what they want...Saving their transporters in the right way...Sending fax to them of what I have received." (Module 4)*

### 6.2.2 Problems

As far as problems associated with ABET are concerned, not a single student cited any problems. As mentioned earlier, this could be because all the students, by sheer virtue of the fact that they were participating in the programme at the time, were very positive towards ABET and hence saw no problems associated with it.

### 6.2.3 Solutions

Needless to say, as none of the students had any problems with ABET none of the students had any recommendations as to how the problems associated with ABET could be solved either! This was one of the reasons why I conducted follow-up interviews with some of the students in the Western cape in August of 1999. In this round of interviews some problems were raised and some solutions suggested too.

## 6.3 Follow-up interviews

A total of seven students were interviewed, of whom two had passed Module 4 and hence could no longer participate in the programme. The other five had dropped out of ABET at some stage.



Of the two students who completed Module 4, both stated that they had benefited from the ABET programme. One of the students explained the benefits of Abet as “...(my) communication improved... (it) gave (me) a breather/break - took pressure off the mind”. The other student stated that ABET “ sharpened me... (I) looked forward to class...(it) provided learning opportunities”.

Of the remaining five students who dropped out of ABET at some stage, three surprisingly stated that they had benefited from the programme. The first of the three respondents reported that ABET had provided him with experience, motivation, improved his communications with customers, and enabled him to teach his children. The second respondent stated that his spelling had improved and his language (vocabulary) had improved slightly. The third respondent said that ABET had enabled him to see positive changes in the education system in that he was able to learn in English and not Afrikaans. He also said that he enjoyed attending classes. The remaining two respondents felt that they had received no benefits from the ABET programme. The one respondent stated that she felt that ABET was boring, while the other respondent said “...(my) mind (was) not there (during classes)...(I) had work responsibilities and (ABET) effected my concentration...(I am) too old (to participate in programme)...(I) felt embarrassed.”

As far as problems associated with ABET are concerned, six of the seven respondents said that they had experienced problems. (Surprisingly the one respondent who said that he had experienced no problems was one that had dropped out of the course. It should be noted though, that this student did complete Module 2 but never got around to enrolling for level 3.) The six respondents identified the following problems:

- *(I) felt that I had already matriculated, why then do the course?... Didn't feel like re-doing school.*
- *Initial negativeness, was suspicious of purpose of course...people dropped out through perceiving that ABET did not take them further (no career advancement)... Operational disruptions.*
- *Management sometimes disrupted classes (calling students back to the operations)... Other students dropping out was upsetting.*
- *...(I was the) only person in class thus lack of communication... operational disrupted class attendance and then we fall back... Teachers sometimes skipped classes... Pressure of homework, projects and exams.*

- ... no benefit... *Didn't like research and homework... Others dropped out, so did I... Repetitive, got bored.*
- ...Operational disruptions.

Finally, five of the seven respondents suggested possible solutions to the problems associated with ABET. The suggested solutions included the following ideas:

- *Course should be more work related.*
- ...more specific to job... *Train students after they have completed Module 4... Make Modules shorter in duration (less than a year for Module)*
- ... managers need to apply more pressure on students (to attend class).
- ... no more pulling students out of class (by managers)... *More study time from management... More students partaking in course.*
- ... shorten classes from one hour to half a hour... *More work related.*

Some of these suggestions certainly are very valid, for example, the suggestion to continue training after level 4. The two students who had completed Module 4 in 1998 had not received any other, higher-level, training since then. Obviously other students took note of this and may have asked what the point of completing ABET would be if training stops thereafter. The suggestion that managers place more pressure on students to attend class is also very significant. If managers are seen to encourage class attendance it would motivate students to continue participating in ABET. One can also appreciate the frustration of a student when he or she is sitting in class and is then called out of class by a manager. Sometimes, due to operational concerns, this was unavoidable.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF ABET**

In Chapters 5 and 6, I discussed the analysis of various management and student characteristics that may have had an influence on their attitudes towards ABET. The next question that I need to address is to what extent this information can be utilised in order to make programmes more efficient and effective. Before I address this question, though, it is essential to define some sort of criteria as to what is an effective and efficient ABET programme, and what is not.

#### **7.1 Indicators of success or failure**

There are numerous elements comprising an ABET programme that give an indication as to the programme's success or failure. One of the most important indicators is class attendance. The level of class attendance gives a good indication as to the commitment to ABET by both the managers and students. In the Grindrod group, all ABET training takes place during working hours. A low class attendance suggests one or both of the following: either the students have little interest in ABET and hence stay away from class, or managers have instructed students not to attend class due to operational concerns. It does sometimes happen that, due to an emergency or some unforeseen circumstance, a manager has had to insist that a particular employee misses a lesson. It is, however, my experience that managers who are positive towards ABET will make a greater effort not to cancel a student's class than managers with less positive attitudes.

An investigation of the registers recording class attendance of ABET students in the Western Cape in 1996, 1997 and 1998 showed student absenteeism increased steadily over this time.

Student dropout rates represents another important criteria for the success or failure of an ABET programme. By the end of January 1997, ABET had been launched in most of the Grindrod divisions in the Western Cape. This included Containerlink Table Bay, Containerlink Metro, Grindrod Seafreight, Grindrod Airfreight, and Fastlane. With the exception of Fastlane (Fastlane is excluded because it has subsequently been bought by another company), a total of



33 students started participating in the ABET programme. A total of 20 students started at Containerlink Table Bay, 6 students at Containerlink Metro, 2 students at Grindrod Seafreight, and 5 students at Grindrod Airfreight. By the end of 1998, only 3 students were still participating in ABET in Grindrods Western Cape. These three students are at the Containerlink - Table Bay branch. Of the 30 students that are no longer participating in ABET, 2 passed level 4 (and hence were no longer part of the programme) and 2 students could not partake due to death or ill health. The remaining 26 students had dropped out of the course. Needless to say, such a drop out rate is unacceptably high and the reasons for this trend should be explored.

Managers who are committed to the ABET programmes will often attend an ABET class purely to observe how the students are doing. They will often approach students and ask how they are finding the course or how they are fairing in their course. This sort of commitment on the part of the management will obviously have a positive influence on the commitment of the student.

Another element that is indicative of the effectiveness and efficiency of an ABET programme, is the pass rates amongst the students. I must emphasize that pass rate is only a rough estimate of the success of an ABET programme because an ABET trainer may incorrectly assess the readiness of a particular student or group of students to write an exam. While this may result in the student or students failing, it does not necessarily indicate a lack commitment on the side of students or managers.

The opposite is also true. A student or group of students may pass a certain ABET level, but may soon lose interest and drop out of the course when placed on the next ABET level. With the exception of one or two instances where an educator may have incorrectly assessed the readiness of a student or group of students to write a particular level exam, the pass rate amongst ABET students in the Western Cape and nationally has been high. The annual national pass rate is between 80-90 per cent. Although one should always strive for better results, the exam results of the ABET students who are still in the programme in Grindrods suggests that the ABET programme is running effectively and efficiently as far as those students that attend are concerned.

As to the question of how to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of an ABET programme, I would suggest that ABET programmes that are well attended by the students, have had a low



student drop-out rate over a period of time and have had a high student pass rate are efficient and effective programmes.

At Grindrod, student attendance is unacceptably low and drop-out rates are unacceptably high. There is therefore lots of room for improvement. I do not, however, believe that the ABET programme at Grindrod was a complete failure. Many students received nationally recognised certificates (even if they have subsequently dropped out at higher ABET levels), and, although it is very difficult to measure, a lot of knowledge has been passed on to students whether they passed examinations or not. The programme has been a learning experience for students, managers, and ABET suppliers alike. With this knowledge, improvements can be made and other companies can learn from the Grindrod experience.

Now that it is clear that there is a lot of room to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ABET in Grindrod, I will focus on how the data I obtained could be applied. As I pointed out earlier, attitudes of managers and students toward ABET are central to the success or failure of any ABET programme. If managers and students have positive attitudes towards ABET they will probably also be committed to the programme.

## **7.2 Selection of managers to co-ordinate ABET programmes**

The remainder of this chapter will consider some suggestions as to how ABET programmes could be made more effective and efficient. It is, however, very important to point out certain limitations before we consider the suggestions. The study was conducted in Grindrod only, and hence we cannot automatically assume that findings can be extended to other companies or industries. While the study may provide some insight into variables that may or may not influence management and student attitude towards ABET, far more research is needed before any of the following suggestions can be regarded as scientifically correct. It must also be borne in mind that the population of managers and students were too small to arrive at any scientific conclusions as to cause and effect relationships between the characteristics on managers and students and their attitudes towards ABET. It is with these limitations in mind that the following suggestions should be considered.

It was not the purpose of this study to develop a recipe on how to change or maintain certain managerial or student attitudes towards ABET. For example, in Chapter 5 I showed that more politically conservative managers have a less positive attitude towards ABET than more liberal managers. This does not mean that I could supply a recipe on how to make conservative



managers more liberal and thereby more positive towards ABET. However, should a director decide to run an ABET programme for his or her employees, a manager or group of managers would be needed to co-ordinate the programme - to decide on ABET suppliers, timetables, eligible students, financing etc. With the knowledge, for example, that more liberal managers tend to be more positive towards ABET than conservative managers, the manager or director would be better able to use this information in making a decision as to which managers to select. Of course, it is not always possible for a director to ascertain the exact political orientation of managers, but the response of managers to labour issues, the opinions of managers, the jokes they may tell etc. may be rough indicators as to a managers political orientation.

In Chapter 5 it was suggested that the most positive attitude is found among managers where ABET has been in operation for less than a year. The least positive attitude is found where ABET has been in operation for between one to two years and a slight increase in attitude among managers where ABET has been in operation for between three to five years. I suggested that the attitude of managers becomes less favourable during the one to two year span because the novelty wears off and the benefits of ABET are not detectable yet. I also suggested that the slight increase in attitude after three to five years is because the benefits start to show (improved literacy and comprehension).

This data suggests that certain steps could be taken to avoid the manager's attitudes becoming negative towards ABET during the second year of operation by, for example, making a concerted effort to involve managers after a year. An invitation to managers to attend a seminar on the progress of their subordinates, coupled with information on national and international trends in ABET may re-kindle the management interest in ABET. Emphasising, at the inception of an ABET programme, that ABET is a long-term training process and that the benefits will often only be felt after some time after the programme's inception, may also help to avoid disillusionment on the part of managers early on.

With regards the status of managers, findings suggest that that managers who are lower on the organisational hierarchy tend to be less positive towards ABET than managers who are higher in the organisational hierarchy. Thus, should a potential ABET supplier wish to sell an ABET course to a company, they would know that presentations should be aimed at higher levels of management to obtain the initial "buy-in" to such a programme. A director of a company would also know to look to higher levels of management for support for such a programme.



The final potential influence on management attitude toward ABET that I considered in Chapter 5 was the education qualifications of the managers. Given that managers with a higher level of education appear to be more positive towards ABET, interested parties are given a better idea of which managers are more likely to support ABET programmes. The placing of managers with lower levels of education on other training courses, even if not in any way related to ABET, may make these managers more positive towards ABET because they would feel less threatened by ABET if they themselves are developing their skills. This may also give them a greater appreciation of training as a whole.

To summarise then, from top management point of view, ABET programmes should be more successfully implemented if the managers who are to co-ordinate the programmes are selected with the following profile in mind:

- Politically liberal or moderate, at least,
- Relatively high status in the organisation, and
- Relatively high level of education.

In addition, top management need to ensure that where the programmes have been implemented for about a year, additional encouraging and motivating input to continue with a supportive attitude is required in order to maintain the managers' positive attitude towards ABET.

### **7.3 Suggestions from managers**

#### **7.3.1 Hold ABET classes outside of official working hours**

I would now like to review some of the suggestions made by the managers themselves. To recap, by far the most common problem identified by managers was operational disruptions. Of the 23 managers interviewed in 1998, 15 cited operational disruptions as a problem, 10 of which suggested classes outside of official working hours as a possible solution to this.

The idea of ABET classes being conducted outside of working hours certainly, in my opinion, is a feasible solution. It would obviously require a far greater sacrifice on the part of the student. I believe that this may result in fewer employees partaking in ABET programmes, but due to the sacrifice, those employees that are prepared to learn outside of working hours would obviously be committed to the programme. I also believe that this would have a positive effect on management commitment to ABET as well. A manager would be more inclined to support a training programme that does not adversely affect the manager's operations than a training



programme that does. It must, however, be noted that even if classes are conducted outside of working hours, managers may still need to make sacrifices, for example, when operational requirements are such that employees need to work overtime.

### **7.3.2 Make contents of ABET courses more relevant to work**

The only other suggestion was made by two of the five managers interviewed in August of 1998. Both these managers suggested a change in the course content of the programme. They believed that a more job related programme would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. I believe that it is important for ABET programmes to be related to the jobs performed by employees. The topics, for example, of essays could centre around the employees' jobs, or when the educator is teaching, he or she should try and refer to as many work situations as possible and stimulate class discussions to be work related. It must, however, be borne in mind that ABET is not a technical course with benefits that are reaped by the company in the short term. ABET is a long-term programme that aims to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of the employee, and create a basis from where more specialized training can take place. Managers should therefore not expect the programmes to be used as training for improving the technical abilities of employees in the short term. The improvement of an employee's numeracy and literacy skills may well have certain indirect benefits to the employee's technical skills, but this is not the central aim of ABET.

### **7.4 Selection of students in the initial phase of implementation**

The first factor that was seen to influence a student's attitude is the years that the student has been employed at the corporation. Findings suggest that the longer the student has been employed in the corporation the more positive his or her attitude towards ABET is inclined to be. This information can be applied in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of ABET programmes.

If a company, for example, decides to embark on an ABET programme for its employees, it may be a good idea to phase the programme in or to start piloting the programme with a smaller group of students. In this way, the company would have the opportunity to identify and solve any problems before embarking on the large scale ABET training of its staff. In light of the findings, it may be good idea to pilot the programme with a small group of staff members who have been employed at the company for many years. Once these employees have been trained for a few months, the company will be in a better position to start ABET classes for



employees that have been in the corporation for shorter periods of time. If an ABET programme is started successfully its chances of long-term success will be far greater.

The next aspect that we considered in our study of students' attitudes toward ABET was the position or status of the student in the organisation. My findings suggest that as the status of the student increases, so the attitude of the student toward ABET is also likely to become more positive. Unfortunately one cannot simply increase the status of the student in order to make the student more positive towards ABET, but, as with the case of the length of service of the employee, it may be feasible to pilot the programme with eligible ABET students who have a comparatively higher status in the organisation than other students, for example, drivers and clerical personnel. Once potential problems have been identified and "ironed out," other employees with lower status levels could be included in the programme.

This information may not only be useful in cases where a company is planning to embark on an ABET programme. It could also be used where ABET has been operational for many years but has experienced high dropout rates and high absenteeism. In such cases, it may be wise to "revive" the programme by focusing efforts on getting drivers and clerical personnel to start attending classes more regularly. Students who have dropped out need to be encouraged to re-enrol. Attempting to revive an ABET programme by using a smaller group of staff members (clerks and drivers) who are likely to have a more positive attitude towards ABET, or are at least likely to re-develop a more positive attitude than labourers, may be more successful than trying to revive an entire ABET programme with all eligible staff members all at once.

### **7.5 Offer higher levels in ABET programme**

The data also suggested that the highest standard successfully passed by the student while still at school may have had an influence on that students' attitude towards ABET. (It was, however acknowledged that the influence of previous schooling on attitude is very slight given the small variance in student attitudes). It was suggested that students that had passed Grades 10, 11 and 12 were slightly less positive towards ABET than students that had completed any of the standards Grades 1 to 9. This is because the highest ABET Module that can be completed in Grindrod is ABET level 4 (which is the equivalent of a Grade 9). Even though many employees have completed standards higher than Grade 9 they are nevertheless eligible for ABET level 4 (sometimes level 3) due to the poor standard of schooling received in their formative years. As already pointed out in Chapter 6, it stands to reason that despite poor schooling a student would



feel that they are achieving little by completing ABET level 4 (Grade 9) when they already have passed a higher standard at school.

I believe that this can be overcome by introducing ABET level 5 (which is the equivalent of Grade 12). In this way, even if a student with a schooling standard of higher than Grade 9 is placed on ABET level 4 they may be more motivated to complete the level so as to be eligible for ABET level 5. In doing so, they will feel that they are benefiting from ABET. The introduction of ABET level 5 may decrease student drop-out rates and absenteeism among students in level 4 who have already passed Grades 10, 11 or 12 (even though they must still first complete ABET 4).

It is also important to review students' suggestions on how to improve the implementation of ABET. As mentioned in Chapter 6, none of the students interviewed in 1998 identified any problems associated with ABET. However, during the follow-up interviews with students in 1999, several issues were raised.

Students need to see that the completion of ABET level 4 enables them to be trained at higher levels. It is very demotivating for a student to complete ABET level 4 and then to receive absolutely no training thereafter. It is after the completion of ABET 4 that the student should be able to be trained in more work related fields. A student, for example, showing leadership skills could attend a supervisor-training course after ABET 4, or a labourer could attend a course that teaches him or her to drive a forklift etc.

The suggestion that managers need to apply more pressure on students to attend class, is another idea put forward by a student. Managers who take an interest in ABET and are seen encouraging students to attend class have a positive influence on the motivation of students. Another suggestion made by a student, which goes hand in hand with applying pressure on students to attend class, is the suggestion that students are no longer pulled out of classes by managers. In extreme cases this may be unavoidable, but if students are regularly pulled out of class this has a negative impact on their motivation to attend classes.

In summary then, considering the factors that relate to students for successful implementation, the following steps could be taken:



- Selection of students for initial or pilot phases for new implementations of ABET should be based on the status of the students (higher level status) and the length of time they have worked for the organisation (several years' service).
- Where students have already had some education in the higher grades at school level, an additional level of ABET should be added or ABET should be seen to lead on to further programmes – possibly of a more technical nature – so as not to demotivate students and to promote the concept of life-long learning.

## 7.6 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I considered some of the factors that gave rise to the need for Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa. The backdrop to the central argument of this thesis is that industry needs to play a crucial role in the creation of literacy opportunities for millions of functionally illiterate South Africans. It cannot just be left up to the government and education department and a few non-governmental organisations to successfully reach out to millions of illiterate South Africans. Industry has access to millions of functionally illiterate employees, and under the banner of human resources development, industry has an essential role to play in providing opportunities to employees.

It is the managers who have to make the investment, in both time and money, when it comes to the implementation of ABET within their respective industries. Money needs to be spent on course material and trainers (educators) and programme administrators need to be paid. Managers have to deal with and continually make contingency plans for the absence of ABET students from the operations of the business while attending class and the resultant temporary loss in manpower. However, for the implementation of courses like ABET to be effective, managers also need to show a keen interest in the programme and the progress of students as students quickly detect any negativity on the side of management, and this has a negative impact on the ABET students and the programme implementation as a whole.

The students, on the other hand, also have to make sacrifices. It is not easy to be dedicated to such a long-term training programme as ABET, particularly when, as an adult, one has numerous other commitments, such as the maintaining of a home and family and other community commitments. It is also difficult to concentrate on learning while one is at work and



is only away from the operations for an hour while attending class, and doing homework and learning for exams after a full days' work.

In order then for managers and students to make these investments and sacrifices, they have to have a positive attitude towards ABET. I am confident that the results of this case study have identified factors that may have a positive or negative influence on the attitudes of managers and students towards ABET. It is my sincere hope that this case study will be of assistance to companies that have implemented or are planning to implement ABET programmes. While I have admitted that the study does not give ready solutions for changing student and management attitudes towards ABET, the mere knowledge of the factors that influence these attitudes can be useful in making ABET programmes in industry more efficient and effective.



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## APPENDIX 1

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MANAGERS



## INTERVIEW OF LINE MANAGEMENT

1. How old are you ? [1] 20-29, [2] 30-39, [3] 40-49, [4] 50-59, [5] 60+ [ ]
2. At which company are you presently employed at ? \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]  
{State location as well}
3. What is your title in the company ? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the nature of the industry that you are employed in ? 1 [Cargo Handeling] 2 [Express Delivery] [ ]  
3 [Clearing & Forwarding]
5. Approximately how long have you worked in this company ? 1. Less than 1 year [ ]  
2. 1-2 years  
3. 3-5 years  
4. 6-10 years  
5. 11+ years
6. Approximately how long has ABET been in operation at your company ? [Rounded off to the closesese year.] 1. Less than 1 year [ ]  
2. 1-2 years  
3. 3-5 years
7. How many staff members do you presently have reporting to you ? 1. 1-2 [ ]  
2. 3-5  
3. 6-10  
4. 11-15  
5. 16-20  
6. 21-30  
7. 31 +
8. How many of the staff members that report to you are presently partaking in ABET ? 1. 1-2 [ ]  
2. 3-5  
3. 6-10  
4. 11-15  
5. 16-20  
6. 21-30  
7. 31+
9. What is your highest education qualification ? 1. STD 7 or lower [ ]  
2. STD 8 or 9  
3. MATRIC  
4. TECHNICON DIPLOMA  
5. HIGHER TECHNICON DIPLOMA  
6. DEGREE  
7. POST GRADUATE  
8. OTHER
10. On a political continuum ranging from the PAC at the extreme left and the Freedom Front at the extreme right, where would you place your own political orientation ?

PAC \_\_\_\_\_ FREEDOM FRONT  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



11. With reference to the statements that I will read to you, please indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a) I think ABET is contributing positively to the increase in productivity levels of our staff members who are partaking in the programme.	1	2	3	4	5
b) ABET has a positive influence on the quality of work that the student delivers in the work place.	1	2	3	4	5
c) ABET is nothing but a waste of company production time.	1	2	3	4	5
d) ABET is a waste of company money that is invested in it.	1	2	3	4	5
e) ABET is essential for the succesful functioning of any company that has employees with low literacy and numeracy skills (i.e. employees eligible for ABET)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Because ABET is just another affirmative action programme it has no real benefit to the company.	1	2	3	4	5
g) ABET has no real benefits for the student.	1	2	3	4	5
h) ABET has a positive influence on the motivation of the employees partaking in it.	1	2	3	4	5
i) ABET creates a more competent work force.	1	2	3	4	5
j) Most ABET students are not really interested in furthering their qualifications, they just use class as an excuse to get out of work.	1	2	3	4	5
k) ABET is perceived by the students as a company benefit and therefore contributes to staff satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
l) Although ABET is in operation, the company would do far better to scale down on time and money invested in ABET and use these resources for other more job related training.	1	2	3	4	5
m) The advantages of ABET far outweigh any temporary operational disruptions that may be caused due to staff being in class.	1	2	3	4	5
n) There is no need for a company to train labourers in literacy or numeracy if their jobs [eg. packer] do not require reading or writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
o) Although there are financial costs [eg stationery, books, trainer fees etc], the benefits of ABET far outweigh these.	1	2	3	4	5

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| p) ABET is beneficial for the development of all students partaking in the programme.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| q) The only people who benefit from ABET are those who derive an income from it, namely the trainers and other suppliers.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| r) ABET raises unrealistic expectations from students that only contributes to staff dissatisfaction in the long run.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| s) The company has implemented ABET because it truly believes in the developmental potential of all staff members that lack formal schooling. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| t) Because ABET is the responsibility of the government, private sector should not be getting involved in such programmes.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. Do you believe that the company has reaped any benefits from its ABET programme ?

1. YES    2. NO    3. UNSURE

[ ]

[ If YES go to question 13, if NO/UNSURE go to question 15]

13. What are the specific benefits that you believe the company has obtained from ABET.

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14. Why would you regard these factors as beneficial to the company ?

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→ 15. Have you experienced any problems attributable to ABET in your working environment eg operational disruptions ?

1. YES    2. NO    3. UNSURE

[ ]

[ if YES go to question 16, if NO/UNSURE thank the respondent & end interview]

16. What are the specific problems that you as a manager have experienced or are presently experiencing ?

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17. Why do you see these as problems ?

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18. Can you suggest any ways as to how these problems can be overcome ?

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[ Thank respondent and end interview ]



APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ABET STUDENTS

Please answer the following questions using either a pen or a pencil. If there is anything that you do not understand please ask your trainer to explain to you.

Please fill in the following information:

1. What is your name ? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your surname ? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the name of the company  
where you work ? \_\_\_\_\_ ☐  
[State location as well]
4. How old are you ? ☐  
(circle the correct answer)
  1. 15-19
  2. 20-29
  3. 30-39
  4. 40-49
  5. 50-59
  6. 60+
5. What is your job title ? [for  
example labourer, checker] \_\_\_\_\_
6. For how many years have you been working at this company ? ☐  
(circle the correct answer)
  1. Less than 1 year
  2. 1-2 years
  3. 3-5 years
  4. 6-10 years
  5. 11+ years
7. What standard did you complete at school ? ☐  
(circle the correct answer)
  1. SUB A
  2. SUB B
  3. STD 1
  4. STD 2
  5. STD 3
  6. STD 4
  7. STD 5
  8. STD 6
  9. STD 7
  10. STD 8
  11. STD 9
  12. STD 10
8. Are you 1. Male or 2. Female ? ☐  
(circle the correct answer)
9. What ABET module are you presently doing ? ☐  
(circle the correct answer)
  1. MODULE 1
  2. MODULE 2
  3. MODULE 3
  4. MODULE 4



10. In what year did you start attending ABET classes ?

- (circle the correct answer)
1. 1990
  2. 1991
  3. 1992
  4. 1993
  5. 1994
  6. 1995
  7. 1996
  8. 1997

[ ]

11. When answering the following questions, please indicate with a cross whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are uncertain (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).

	SA	A	U	D	SD
a) I enjoy attending my ABET classes.	1	2	3	4	5
b) ABET is actually a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
c) ABET has made me more proud to be working for this company.	1	2	3	4	5
d) I only attend class so that I can get out of doing my normal tasks for a while.	1	2	3	4	5
e) I feel that I have benefitted from the ABET course that I am attending.	1	2	3	4	5
f) I only attend class to keep the managers happy.	1	2	3	4	5
g) I have become more motivated at work since I have started with ABET.	1	2	3	4	5
h) I would be quite happy if ABET were to be stopped in the company.	1	2	3	4	5
i) I am very pleased that the company has given me the opportunity to partake in ABET.	1	2	3	4	5
j) I don't believe that ABET holds any benefits for me.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Have you experienced any benefits from partaking in the ABET programme ? (circle the correct answer)

1. YES

2. NO

3. UNSURE

[ ]

(If YES go to question 13, if NO/UNSURE go to question 14)



13. Please write the benefits (in priority order) that you have obtained on the lines below.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

→14. Have you experienced any problems as a result of partaking in the ABET programme ? (circle the correct answer)

1. YES

2. NO

3. UNSURE

[ ]

(If YES go to question 15, if NO/UNSURE you have completed the questionnaire - thank you for your assistance)



15. Please write the problems (in priority order) that you have experienced on the lines below.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

16. If you have any suggestions as to how these problems can be solved please write your ideas on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for your time and assistance.



APPENDIX 3

STATISTICAL ANALYSES



## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ABET STUDENTS

As can be seen in Table 1, the overall internal consistency reliability of the 10-item scale used to assess the students' attitudes towards ABET classes is 0.75. This can be interpreted as acceptable reliability. Moreover, the means of the individual items range from 4.40 to 4.92, which all closely approximate the theoretical maximum of 5 for each item. This implies a very positive and homogeneous attitude towards ABET classes. Although item 1 has the lowest corrected item-total correlation and lowest squared multiple correlation, deletion of the item does not result in any significant improvement of Alpha (see last column in Table 1). It has therefore been retained.

**Table 1 – Results of reliability analysis**

Item	Item mean	Std dev	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation <sup>a</sup>	Squared multiple correlation <sup>b</sup>	Alpha if item deleted
1	4.92	0.27	41.50	16.54	0.19	0.15	0.754
2	4.66	0.72	41.80	14.20	0.43	0.49	0.728
3	4.44	0.93	42.02	13.33	0.42	0.57	0.731
4	4.60	0.88	41.86	14.20	0.31	0.63	0.748
5	4.68	0.79	41.78	13.73	0.45	0.68	0.723
6	4.72	0.57	41.74	14.44	0.52	0.63	0.720
7	4.40	0.99	42.06	11.73	0.64	0.70	0.688
8	4.82	0.39	41.64	15.75	0.37	0.42	0.741
9	4.66	0.80	41.80	13.71	0.45	0.66	0.723
10	4.56	0.76	41.90	14.13	0.41	0.21	0.731
Overall reliability coefficient (Alpha) = 0.750							

<sup>a</sup> Pearson correlation between the score on the individual item and the sum of the scores on the remaining items.

<sup>b</sup> Squared multiple correlation with the item of interest as the dependent variable and all of the other items as independent variables.

Apart from the reliability analysis, a factor analysis was performed in an attempt to identify the dimensions underlying the 10 attitudinal items. A principal component method of extraction was used together with a varimax rotation. This resulted in three factors being extracted, the results of which are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Results of factor analysis**

Item	Factor loadings			Communalities
	1	2	3	
1	0.38	-0.28	0.39	0.37
2	0.21	0.07	0.72	0.57
3	0.70	0.23	-0.02	0.54
4	-0.08	0.12	0.88	0.79
5	0.22	0.83	0.00	0.74
6	0.78	0.13	0.20	0.66
7	0.65	0.61	0.01	0.79
8	0.75	-0.06	0.14	0.59
9	-0.09	0.78	0.38	0.76
10	0.18	0.33	0.45	0.35
% Variance explained	23.59%	19.42%	18.46%	--



It is evident from Table 2 that the three factors explain altogether 61.47% of the variance in the 10 items. To interpret the factors, only factor loadings of 0.70 have been regarded as statistically significant, given the small sample size. These values appear in italics. Factor 1 is predominantly described by items 3, 6 and 8, factor 2 by items 5 and 9, and factor 3 by items 2 and 4.

**Table 3 – Attempt to interpret factors**

<b>Factor 1 (Company culture related attitudes??)</b>	<b>Factor 2 (Personal gratitude &amp; appreciation??)</b>	<b>Factor 3 (Perceived uselessness??)</b>
<i>Item 3</i> – ABET has made me more proud to be working for this company	<i>Item 5</i> – I feel that I have benefited from the ABET course that I'm attending	<i>Item 2</i> – ABET is actually a waste of time
<i>Item 6</i> – I only attend class to keep the managers happy	<i>Item 9</i> – I am very pleased that the company has given me the opportunity to partake in ABET	<i>Item 4</i> – I only attend class so that I can get out of doing my normal tasks for a while
<i>Item 8</i> – I would be quite happy if ABET were to be stopped in the company		

The labels assigned to the factors in Table 3 may however come across as arbitrary and somewhat imposed upon the results. Moreover, since two of the items do not load significantly on any factor (items 1 and 10), and also because item 6 is factorially complex (high loadings on two factors), calculation of subscale scores is not recommended. For this reason only total scores will be considered in the subsequent analyses.

What follows below are analyses to determine whether the mean total scores on the ABET attitudinal scale vary according to the different levels of each of seven categorical variables. These categorical variables are age, gender, job title, years at company, school standard completed, ABET module being done and the year started attending ABET classes. Table 4 contains the analysis for age.

**Table 4 – Total attitudinal score x Age (4 levels)**

<b>Age category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Parametric</b>		<b>Non-parametric</b>	
					<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>p</b>
<b>20-29</b>	3	84.00	13.11	14.33	2.927	0.043	5.812	0.121
<b>30-39</b>	21	89.24	10.05	23.07				
<b>40-49</b>	15	95.07	5.18	30.90				
<b>50+</b>	14	94.71	6.73	31.43				
<b>Total</b>	53	92.04	8.69	--				

As can be seen in Table 4, both a parametric test (ANOVA or F test) as well as a non-parametric equivalent (Kruskal Wallis X<sup>2</sup> test) were performed. The reason for including non-parametric test results is because of the small sample sizes associated with the levels of the categorical variable. Small sample sizes can result in the central limit theorem not being applicable, thereby violating the normality assumption of parametric tests. Because the results of the two types of tests in Table 4 are contradictory (F test:  $p < 0.05$  = significant difference; and Kruskal Wallis X<sup>2</sup> test:  $p > 0.05$  = no significant difference), one should be guided here by the results of the non-parametric procedure. The conclusion is thus that the mean total ABET attitudinal scores do not vary significantly according to the four different age levels.



However, because the lack of significant difference could be an artefact of the particular age grouping used, the age variable was recoded to consist of only two levels, namely 20-29 years and 40 years and older. Again both parametric as well as non-parametric tests were applied. In this case, however, given that there are only two levels of the categorical variable, the parametric procedure of choice was a t test for independent samples, with the Mann-Whitney U test as its non-parametric equivalent. The results are summarised in Table 5.

**Table 5 – Total attitudinal score x Age (2 levels)**

Age category	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					t	p	U	p
20-39	24	88.58	10.29	21.98	-2.688	0.011	227.50	0.027
40+	29	94.90	5.87	31.16				
Total	53	92.04	8.69	--				

According to Table 5 students of 40 years and older hold significantly more favourable attitudes towards ABET than students between the ages of 20 and 39. However, this does not imply that younger learners have a negative attitude because the mean total score for each age category is more than 80 (which is very high, given that the theoretical maximum is 100).

Table 6 highlights the association of gender with the total ABET attitudinal scores.

**Table 6 – Total attitudinal score x Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					t	p	U	p
Male	45	92.89	8.12	24.30	0.495	0.623	31.500	0.461
Female	2	90.00	5.66	17.25				
Total	47	92.77	8.01	--				

As can be seen in Table 6, men and women do not differ significantly regarding their mean total scores on the ABET attitudinal scale ( $p > 0.05$ ).

In Table 7 the analysis is performed with job title categories.

**Table 7 – Total attitudinal score x Job title**

Job title	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					F	p	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Labourer	16	89.62	10.23	22.75	0.845	0.476	2.590	0.459
Attendant	8	92.50	6.91	25.13				
Driver	19	92.63	8.67	27.50				
Clerical	9	95.33	7.94	32.28				
Total	52	92.15	8.81	--				

As can be seen in Table 7, no significant difference exists between the ABET attitudinal scores of students within four job title categories. For both the F test as well as the Kruskal Wallis X<sup>2</sup> test the associated p value is greater than 0.05.



Table 8 concerns the number of years that the respondents have been at their respective companies.

**Table 8 – Total attitudinal score x Years at company**

Years at company	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					F	p	X <sup>2</sup>	p
>2	8	82.50	9.90	12.94	5.303	0.003	10.297	0.016
3-5	15	91.47	7.61	24.57				
6-10	10	93.40	9.00	29.20				
11+	19	95.37	6.11	32.32				
Total	52	91.88	8.70	--				

As can be seen in Table 8, a significant difference was found between the total ABET attitudinal scores associated with the four year categories ( $p < 0.05$ ) – this applies for both the parametric and non-parametric procedures. Inspection of the means in Table 7 reveals that the greater the number of years spent at the company, the more favourable the attitude towards ABET.

In Table 9 the ABET attitudinal scores are related to school standard completed.

**Table 9 – Total attitudinal score x School standard completed**

School completed	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					F	p	X <sup>2</sup>	p
None	2	91.00	1.41	20.25	0.049	0.985	0.793	0.851
SubA–Std3	23	92.35	9.72	28.76				
Std4–Std7	22	92.36	8.18	27.64				
Std8–Std10	7	91.14	8.78	25.00				
Total	54	92.15	8.64	--				

According to Table 9 the ABET attitudinal scores do not vary significantly along the four levels of school standard completed.

Table 10 contains the relation between ABET attitude and the particular ABET module being done.

**Table 10 – Total attitudinal score x ABET module being done**

Module	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					F	p	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Module 1	33	91.21	8.97	25.59	2.142	0.128	5.623	0.060
Module 2	12	96.50	7.09	36.50				
Module 3/4	9	89.78	8.09	22.50				
Total	54	92.15	8.64	--				

There is no significant difference between the total attitudinal scores of respondents within the four module groupings, as is evident from Table 10.



Lastly, Table 11 relates the year that the respondents started to attend ABET classes to their scores on the ABET attitudinal scale.

**Table 11 – Total attitudinal score x Year started attending ABET classes**

Year started	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Parametric		Non-parametric	
					F	p	X <sup>2</sup>	p
1994	3	95.33	8.08	31.00	2.735	0.055	7.916	0.048
1995	10	97.40	5.74	34.05				
1996	7	86.57	12.63	18.57				
1997/1998	28	91.50	7.42	21.88				
Total	48	92.25	8.51	--				

As can be seen in Table 11, the results of the non-parametric test reveal that respondents who enrolled for ABET in 1994 and 1995 hold significantly more favourable attitudes than those who enrolled from 1996 to 1998.



## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LINE MANAGEMENT

The results of the reliability analysis for the 20-item attitudinal scale for line management are given in Table 12. The overall internal consistency reliability coefficient is 0.89, which can be interpreted as strong reliability. Again all the original items have been kept in the final scale because deletion of any item does not result in a significant improvement of Alpha. The greatest improvement is by a mere 0.04, should item 16 be deleted.

**Table 12 – Results of reliability analysis**

Item	Item mean	Std dev	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation <sup>a</sup>	Alpha if item deleted
1	3.52	1.08	74.09	70.45	0.45	0.889
2	3.83	0.94	73.78	68.18	0.69	0.879
3	4.22	0.90	73.39	67.25	0.79	0.875
4	4.26	0.54	73.35	74.69	0.50	0.886
5	3.74	0.96	73.87	73.03	0.35	0.891
6	4.09	0.42	73.52	76.35	0.44	0.888
7	4.39	0.50	73.22	76.45	0.34	0.889
8	3.74	0.96	73.87	68.30	0.66	0.880
9	3.65	0.83	73.96	68.32	0.78	0.876
10	3.78	0.80	73.83	74.24	0.35	0.890
11	3.74	0.69	73.87	75.85	0.28	0.891
12	3.57	0.73	74.04	70.13	0.74	0.878
13	3.39	0.99	74.22	66.91	0.73	0.877
14	4.13	0.69	73.48	72.72	0.55	0.884
15	3.74	0.81	73.87	69.03	0.74	0.877
16	4.13	0.34	73.48	79.62	-0.01	0.894
17	4.26	0.45	73.35	75.87	0.46	0.887
18	3.78	0.67	73.83	72.88	0.56	0.884
19	3.61	0.99	74.00	73.73	0.29	0.893
20	4.04	0.82	73.57	72.98	0.43	0.887

<sup>a</sup> Pearson correlation between the score on the individual item and the sum of the scores on the remaining items.

Because of the very limited sample size, a factor analysis could not be performed on the correlations of the items comprising the ABET attitudinal scale for management. A factor analysis requires at least five times as many cases as there are items but in our case the ratio is almost one-to-one (23 cases to 20 items). Also because of this sample size of 23 for line managers (which is less than half of that of the ABET students), only non-parametric statistics will be considered in the analyses to follow.

The total scores of the line managers on the ABET attitudinal scale will be related to seven categorical variables, namely age, highest educational qualification, political orientation, the number of years at the company, the time that ABET has been in operation at the company, the number of staff members reporting and the number of staff members reporting that are partaking in ABET.



**Table 13 – Total attitudinal score x Age**

Age category	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
30-39	5	83.80	3.96	15.20	6.057	0.048
40-49	7	70.00	9.75	7.14		
50+	10	79.80	7.57	12.70		
Total	22	77.59	9.24	--		

As can be seen in Table 13, the Kruskal Wallis X<sup>2</sup> test detected a significant difference between the attitudinal scores of the line managers in three age groupings ( $p < 0.05$ ).

No significant differences were however detected for the remainder of the categorical variables, as is evident in Tables 14 to 19.

**Table 14 – Total attitudinal score x Highest educational qualification**

Age category	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
Below matric	4	76.75	6.24	8.00	2.353	0.308
Matric	14	74.93	11.02	12.36		
Post-matric	5	79.80	4.09	14.20		
Total	23	77.52	9.03	--		

**Table 15 – Total attitudinal score x Political orientation**

Political orientation	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
Liberal	4	78.00	3.46	10.25	0.871	0.647
Moderate	13	78.15	10.12	13.04		
Conservative	6	75.83	10.07	10.92		
Total	23	77.52	9.03	--		

**Table 16 – Total attitudinal score x Number of years worked at the company**

Years worked at company	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
Less than 5	7	78.14	10.57	12.36	0.075	0.963
6 to 10	3	80.33	4.62	12.50		
11 or more	13	76.54	9.32	11.69		
Total	23	77.52	9.03	--		



**Table 17 – Total attitudinal score x Years ABET has been in operation at company**

Years in operation	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
Less than 1	2	87.50	3.54	21.00	4.650	0.098
1 to 2	6	74.83	13.88	10.92		
3 to 5	15	77.27	6.42	11.23		
Total	23	77.52	9.03	--		

**Table 18 – Total attitudinal score x Number of staff members reporting**

Number of staff	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
Less than 21	4	74.25	10.87	10.25	0.390	0.823
21 to 30	4	80.75	2.63	12.50		
31 or more	15	77.53	9.77	12.33		
Total	23	77.52	9.03	--		

**Table 19 – Total attitudinal score x Number of staff members reporting that are partaking in ABET**

Number of ABET staff	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean rank	Non-parametric	
					X <sup>2</sup>	p
1 to 2	3	67.33	10.69	6.33	2.679	0.262
3 to 5	8	78.38	6.91	11.88		
6 or more	11	79.18	9.25	12.64		
Total	22	77.27	9.17	--		